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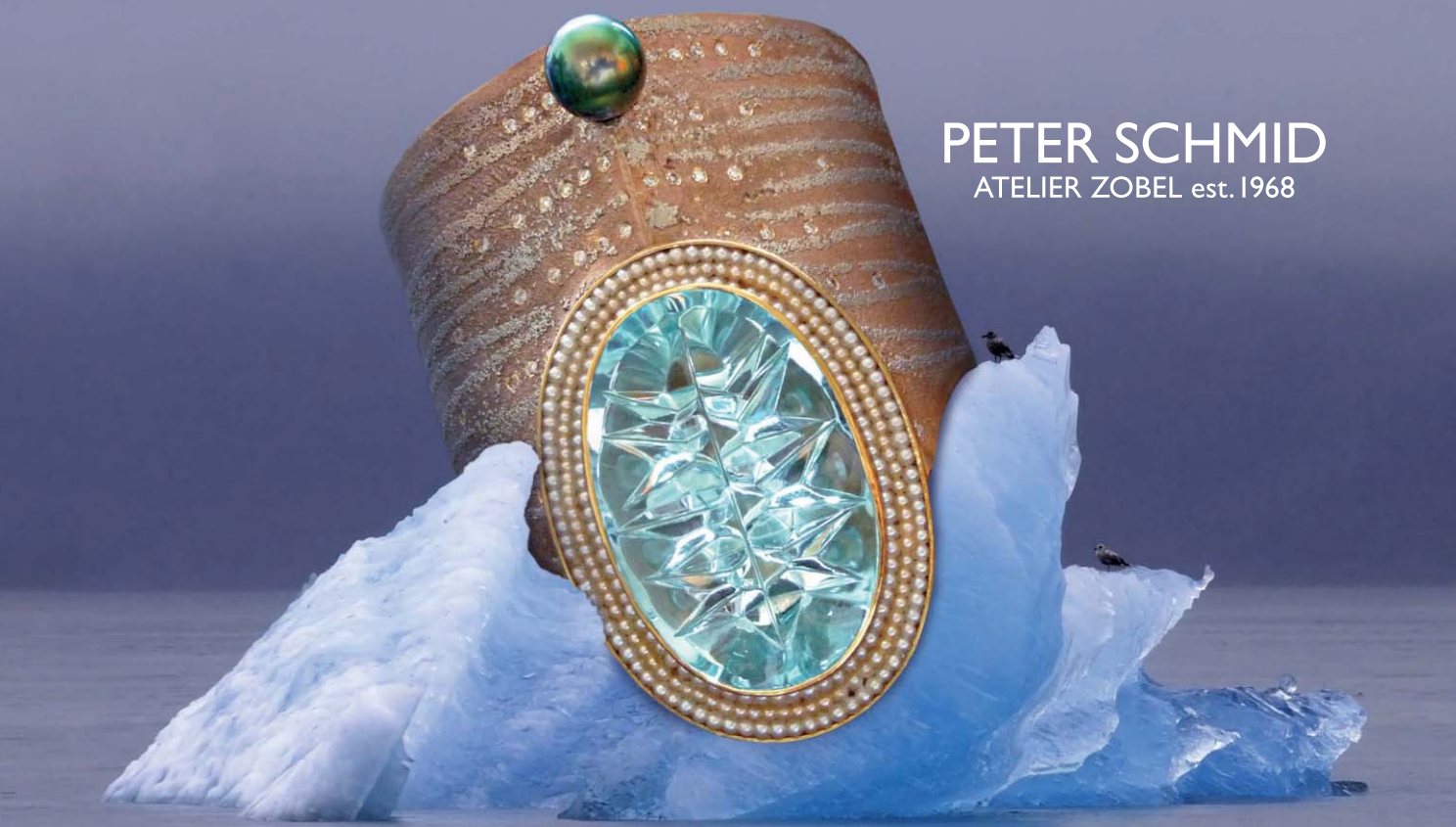
The Rebel Metal: Rose Gold



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1 ⅞ x 1 ¼ x ¾"
PHOTO: DON FREEMAN

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FOREWORD

THE ACTS OF looking and seeing, although related, are two distinct endeavors. The difference is akin to that between existing and living. While looking remains passive, even inattentive, seeing is active and fully engaged. Because seeing demands extra effort and takes time, the majority among us is resigned to be lookers, not seers. This is where the artist steps in, serving as a catalyst to heightened vision. "Things *are* because we see them, and what we see, and how we see it depends on the arts that have influenced us," claimed Oscar Wilde.

Featured artist Peter Skubic echoes this wisdom. He bemoans the fact that "most people don't see anything," and according to writer Liesbeth den Besten, this general lack of perception provides Skubic with a raison d'etre for making his provocative art. Among the various creative strategies Skubic enlists to this end are the recurrence of mirrors, which deliberately toy with the viewer's sense of vision.

A similar concern motivates jeweler George Sawyer, whose sophisticated and technically demanding work is showcased in our In Production section. "The average person doesn't know what they're looking at," says Sawyer, who, through committed education and an interactive website, strives to train people "to look close enough at a very small object to see the art."

Metalsmith's LOOK department was designed to achieve the same goal: to get readers to pause and become visually absorbed in the art. This issue's "guest looker," Marilyn da Silva, approached her task in earnest. "In our busy lives, we often overlook the treasures surrounding us when we go outside," writes da Silva, who selected work that "shows unique and thoughtful interpretation of natural objects through careful observation."

It is hoped that this and the other articles in these pages will enhance your powers of observation and sharpen your ability to truly *see*. Because as Wilde further noted, "One does not see anything until one sees its beauty."

SUZANNE RAMLJAK
EDITOR

The mission of *Metalsmith* magazine is to document, analyze, and promote excellence in jewelry and metalsmithing. In fulfillment of the goal of producing a significant document of the field, editorial content will emphasize contemporary activities and ideas, with supportive content to include relevant historical work and critical issues.

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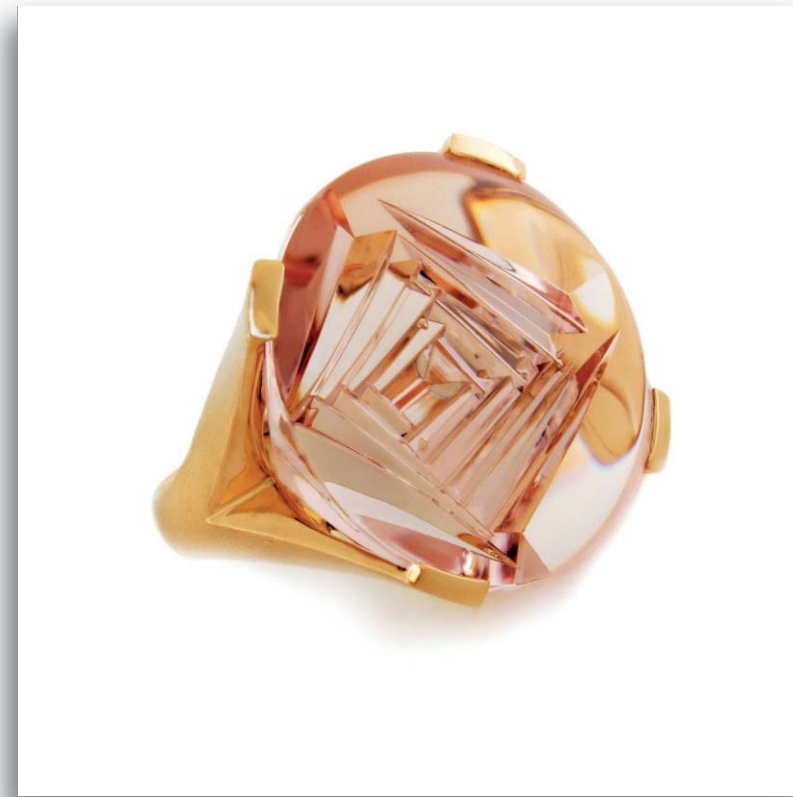

Above: Rose gold and morganite ring by Munsteiner Studio.
Left: Earrings by Daniel Porter Stevens. Pendants by Marco Borghesi.
Earrings by Lisa Black. Rings by Alberian & Aulde. Ring by Paolo Marcolongo.

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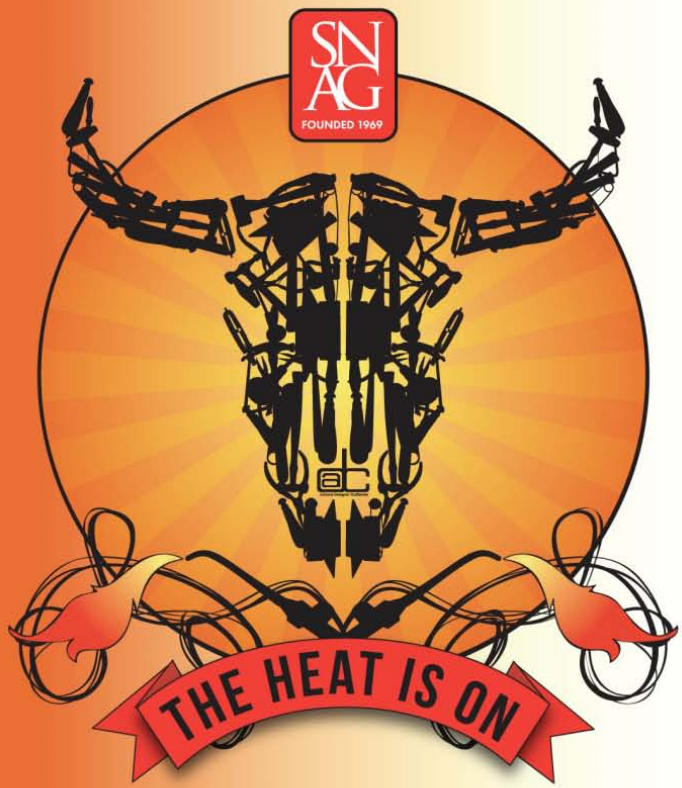

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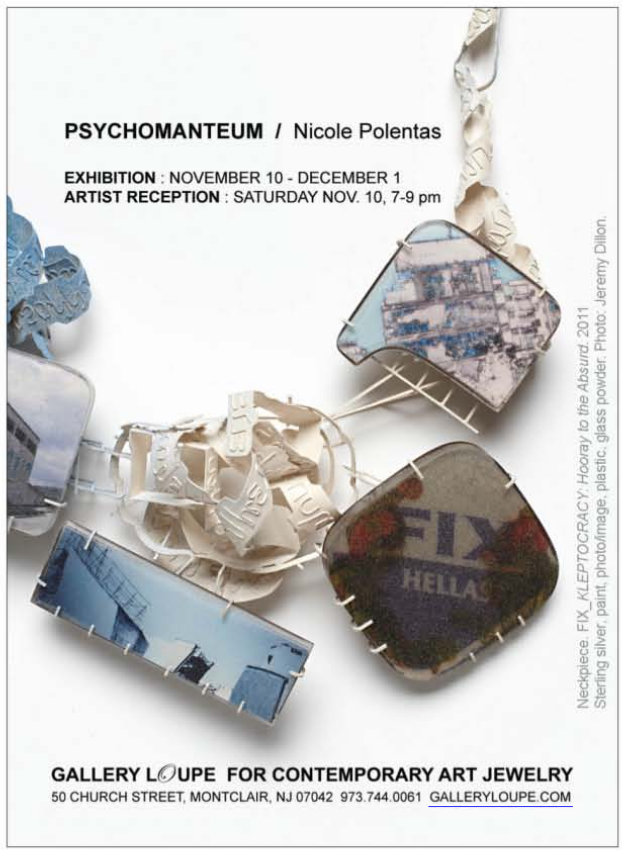

Neckpiece. FIX_KLEPTOCRACY: Hooray to the Absurd. 2011. Sterling silver, paint, photo/image, plastic, glass powder. Photo: Jeremy Dillon.

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Anniversary Braillecelet, c 2008. Photo: Hap Sakwa

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The Nature of Things

BY MARILYN DA SILVA

MANY YEARS AGO my husband, Jack, presented me with a hummingbird's nest he'd found on the ground. I marveled at how such a small nest could be so sturdily built. The edge was trimmed in white fibers, almost like a fur collar. There were remnants of tiny eggshells inside. I could hardly believe that a whole family of hummingbirds had started their lives in such a tiny place. This nest still sits on my bench.

Throughout history, artists have been inspired by Mother Nature's abilities as an architect, mathematician, storyteller and more. But in our busy lives, we often overlook the treasures surrounding us when we go outside. I am drawn to work that shows unique and thoughtful interpretation of natural objects through careful observation. Surface, color, form and detail add to the compelling qualities that emphasize both nature's simplicities and complexities.

Marilyn da Silva, a widely exhibited metalsmith, is professor and chair of the Jewelry/Metal Arts department at California College of the Arts.

LINDA THREADGILL
Offering, 2012
copper, brass
6 x 17 x 17"
PHOTO: JIM THREADGILL

JENNIFER TRASK
Chrysanthemum, Type 11, 2011
found frame fragments, 23.5k gold leaf, resin, rattlesnake, coyote, cow bones, antler
9 ½ x 9 x 4 ½"

HEATHER BAYLESS
House of the House, 2012
sterling silver
5 x 6 x 6"

JUDITH KINGHORN
Dahlia, 2011
sterling silver, 24k gold, 22k granulation
2 x 3 x ⅞"
PHOTO: PETER LEE

DAVID HUANG
Luminous Relic #875, 2011
copper, sterling silver, 23k gold leaf
2 ¾ x 3 ¼ x 3 ¼"

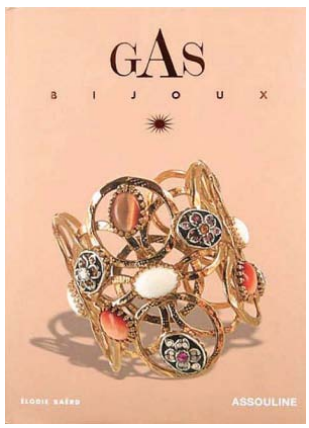
DEBORAH LOZIER
Hand-me-down, 2011
found wood, Norwegian silver and silver plate, sterling silver
largest - 8 x 2 x ⅝"

ROBERTA AND DAVID WILIAMSON
The Third Person Between Us , 2012
sterling silver, copper, brass, steel, paper, wood, glass, vintage chalkboard
5 x 12 x 1 ¾"

GAS Bijoux
Adorning Bardot to J. Lo

BY TONI GREENBAUM

I HAVE A dirty little secret. I'm addicted to GAS Bijoux, a brand of costume jewelry sold through a dozen eponymous boutiques and select retail stores in 40 countries worldwide. I buy mine mostly at the GAS Bijoux in New York's Nolita, or the shop near Place Vendôme in Paris. Due to the considerable success of the former location, opened in 2001, the firm has added two more New York establishments, one on the Upper West Side (2009), the other in Greenwich Village (2010). I must admit, I am incapable of walking through the portals of these small but seductive emporiums without making a purchase.



Cover of *GAS Bijoux*, by Élodie Baërd (New York: Assouline, 2010)

The company was founded in 1969 in St. Tropez, by André Gas, a French artist, who had studied painting and sculpture at École des Beaux-Arts in Paris before concentrating on engraving, his primary field of endeavor. In fact, his signature "Diva" earrings still incorporate the engraved arabesques that are one of his distinctive motifs. Gas's first offerings—charm bracelets fabricated from African wood amulets called *gris-gris*, purchased during a 1969 trip to Dakar, Senegal—were an instant sensation among the glitterati vacationing on the beaches of the Côte d'Azur. These, along with similar ethnically inspired "Talisman" necklaces, were initially sold at the Dames de France department store chain (precursor to the famed Galeries Lafayette). Successively updated versions of these assembled pieces, strung with a variety of metal charms and glass beads, persist to this day, and have been much imitated.

Gas opened his first retail store in St. Tropez in 1970. Two years later he established an atelier in Roucas Blanc, on one of the winding streets overlooking his home town of Marseille. He currently employs about 50 artisans, many of whom have been with him from the start; the offspring of several makers work in the studio as well. André Gas himself has lived with his family in an apartment within the same building since the launch of the business. For over a decade, daughter Marie has been his "muse," as well as the house's artistic director, while son Olivier has tended to business development.

What makes GAS Bijoux so compelling? This low-profile firm's perpetual success can be attributed mostly to a brilliant marketing strategy, based upon broad stylistic diversity propelled by lightening-fast changes in what's available at any given moment. Almost every visit to the boutique affords surprises, with remarkably little overlap. Threading through the "collections" is a potent salute to history and locale. One may discern a nod at ancient or antique European motifs—medieval, renaissance, baroque, Victorian, Edwardian—but oversized and often tongue-in-cheek. The "Ninon" series, for example, originally introduced as the "Byzance" series in 1978, was inspired by a Byzantine format, in which multicolored cabochons surround a large central stone. Depending on one's point of reference, this classic composition might be reminiscent of jewels from ancient Rome, migratory tribes, or Mughal India. Gas has also been influenced by a variety of exotic ethnic modes, including African, Middle Eastern, Indian, and Southeast Asian, along with Mexican, and even Native American. "Evantail" earrings (1988) recall Moroccan or Yemenite formats, while the "Cheyenne" series was motivated by the paintings of Kiowa artist T. C. Cannon, many purchased by Gas in the mid-1990s. An ecumenical quality pervades GAS designs. The better versed one is in jewelry history and theory, the more one can enjoy the thematic references.

Still an inveterate traveler, GAS brings back bits and pieces from around the world, such as antique chains found in flea markets, odd crystal beads and rhinestones, and unusual metal castings, all intended for use in production. His jewelry can be seriously formal or comically amusing, geometrically abstract or objectively figurative. One of the most impressive aspects of each presentation is that unlike commercial costume jewelry, which is industrially standardized, no two GAS examples are ever exactly alike. Schematic details, as well as findings, vary, the latter usually integrated into the overall structure. And in contrast to most costume jewelry, the making of GAS jewels is never

The better versed one is in jewelry history and theory, the more one can enjoy GAS's thematic references.

Bora Bora Bracelet, 1990
silver, coral, turquoise, roman coins (one of a kind)
PHOTO: GAS BIJOUX/MATTIEU DELUC

outsourced; each piece is impeccably crafted by hand at the workshop in France. Although the company is enterprisingly marketed through the established fashion press, GAS shuns typical promotions through the trade circuit, such as retail catalogues and appearances at expos. There are no semi-annual collections designed to coincide with the fashion industry. Many pieces, for example, the "Bora Bora" bracelet (1990), fabricated from silver, coral, turquoise, and Roman coins; the "Ninoshka" series (mid-1990s); and most of the enameled items are one-of-a-kind.

Costume jewelry offers alternatives to fine jewels, which it can faithfully imitate; its format may be sizable and exuberant without the technical limitations and/or financial restrictions imposed by precious metals and gemstones. Costume jewelry also offers an opportunity for experimentation, and encourages excess; it augments clothing, thereby topping off the signs and symbols of a particular cultural framework. Costume jewelry can be ironic, subverting political, social, economic, religious, and ceremonial traditions. GAS Bijoux does it all, and not solely as a vehicle for communication and commentary but for the shape and shine, the glitter and glow, the sheer fun. GAS Bijoux is big; it's brash; it's bold; it's comfortably engineered. But best of all, it's outrageously sexy!

Cheyenne Earrings, mid-1990s
hand-painted white metal
PHOTO: GAS BIJOUX/MATTIEU DELUC

Toni Greenbaum is an art historian specializing in twentieth- and twenty-first-century jewelry and metalwork.

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Arizona
Desert Bloom

BY BEVERLY K. BRANDT

THE RECESSION WE'RE experiencing nationwide has taken its toll on Arizona's metalsmiths. Collectors throughout the state have abandoned houses due to mortgage defaults, many craft galleries have closed permanently, and the price of metals continues to soar. Yet artists here are responding to these hardships in both pragmatic and innovative ways. Metalsmiths have either adopted a mixed-media approach (in which precious metals compose a smaller proportion of the finished object) or are using recycled metals—original patina intact. Kit Carson, an Arizona jeweler featured in the recent PBS "Craft in America" series, speaks eloquently of the potential of "romantic rust," the ability to make something beautiful with limited means. Such resourcefulness has characterized Arizona's metalsmiths since the state's pre-territorial days. As 2012, the year of the state's centenary, draws to a close, it is appropriate to consider both historical precedents and contemporary trends in Arizonan metal arts.

Silversmith, Navajo Reservation, Arizona, 1938

For centuries, fiber and clay were the prevailing media of indigenous peoples inhabiting the American Southwest, but with the arrival of the Spanish *plateros* in the 17th century, these silversmiths trained the Mexicans, who in turn trained the Navajo in a new art form. As the Navajo transmitted the craft to the Zuni and Hopi, Native American silverwork acquired an eclectic style, incorporating Spanish (or Mexican), Moorish, Anglo, and indigenous influences, borrowing even from the distant Plains Indians. Despite the fact that Arizona had limited reserves of gold, silver, lead, and zinc, silverwork flourished through the use of Mexican silver dollars, which were melted down and repurposed into functional and decorative wares through the 1930s. Native American silver production was further spurred by the advent of trading posts, which cropped up along the route of the transcontinental railroad. As well, the subsequent influx of goods and tourists from the East, combined with the savvy marketing schemes of business entrepreneurs, served to influence the form, function, and ornament of Native American silver. Non-native items such as tie clips, napkin rings and cuff links began to appear alongside traditional squash blossom necklaces, concha belts, and bracelets.

After the Civil War, Arizona's economy began to evolve around the so-called "Five Cs": cattle, copper, citrus, cotton, and climate. With cattle came cowboys, whose needs included functional wrought iron gear, such as bridle fittings and horse shoes, as well as personal items like powder horns, belt buckles, and buttons, which were often produced in silver. The blacksmith was always a key figure in the West. Today, Cavalliere Blacksmith Shop (Old Town Scottsdale) and Wm. Flores and Son Blacksmith & Welding (Tucson)—both established in the 1920s—carry on that age-old tradition.

Large-scale copper mining has been critical to the Arizona economy since the 1880s. Key mines are located in Morenci, Bisbee, Ajo, Jerome, Superior, and Globe-Miami. Some of these have also provided turquoise as a byproduct, while gemstones emanated from several tiny towns like Peridot, located in Gila County. Today, the Tucson Gem & Mineral Show (held annually since 1955) is testimony to the riches of Arizona's mines. Mining aside, Arizona's climate has proved tremendously beneficial to the evolution of metal craft in the state, and continues to attract tourists year-round. In the cooler months, from mid-October till April, outdoor art fairs abound and the gallery scene revs up with art walks taking place after sundown on Thursday or Friday evenings. Favorite galleries include West of the Moon (Flagstaff), Pinnacle (North Scottsdale), French Designer Jewelry (Scottsdale), Practical Art (Phoenix), Indulge and La Fuente (Sedona), Newman (Prescott),

As the state's centenary draws to a close, it is appropriate to consider both historical precedents and contemporary trends in Arizonan metal arts.

Mountain Trails (Tlaquepaque/Sedona), Settlers West, Obsidian, and Medicine Man (Tucson), and Karin Newby (Tubac). Artists, collectors, and critics alike lament the closing in 1998 of the Joanne Rapp Gallery/ The Hand & The Spirit, which set the standard for beautiful installations of fine craft in metal, clay, glass, wood, and fiber. Due to the overall decrease in the number of galleries, and the ever-rising standards among those that remain, many Arizona metal artists are opting for an independent route, turning to Internet sites, like Etsy, to promote and sell their work.

Though Phoenix became the territorial capitol in the 1880s, the city's first major growth spurt occurred only in the late 1940s, when widespread availability of air conditioning inspired a postwar housing boom. Warm weather, clear light, low humidity, and desert views attracted a roster of notable and distinctive personalities. Foremost among these was Frank Lloyd Wright, who established Taliesin West as a winter home and architecture school in 1932. The visionary Italian architect Paolo Soleri studied there briefly, then went on to establish Arcosanti (his utopian city in the desert North of Phoenix, begun 1970) and Cosanti, a studio in Scottsdale founded in 1956, known for patinated, cast bronze wind chimes (sales of which support the on-going work at Arcosanti).

The "Soleri Bridge" (2010) is a recent addition to the Scottsdale Waterfront area. Other mid-century arrivals and pioneers included Clare Yares, who fabricated fittings and furnishings for local galleries and museums before turning his attention to the making of elegantly spare jewelry. Sculptor John Waddell arrived in the 1950s, teaching art at Arizona State College (now Arizona State University), eventually resigning that post to devote himself to sculpting life-size female figures. A number of other prominent sculptors who work in metals and mixed media immigrated to Arizona in the 1970s and 1980s, among them Gary Slater (Tempe), Curt Brill and Moira Geoffrion (Tucson), and Clyde "Ross" Morgan (Sedona).

Some of these individuals built programs at Arizona's three state universities: the late Don Haskin established the metal foundry at the University of Arizona (Tucson). Sadly, that program closed years ago, and the one at Northern Arizona University (Flagstaff)—currently led by Victoria Altepeter—is being phased out. But the metals program at Arizona State (Tempe) continues to attracted talented students. David Pimentel led ASU's program from 1973 to 2004; Becky McDonah succeeded him in 2005.

Many factors have contributed to the innovative use of metal in public art projects and architecture in Arizona: its highly respected architecture schools at Arizona State, University of Arizona, and Taliesin West; a collaborative arts environment; the state's historic association with mining; and the arid climate. Kevin Berry's *Tributary Wall* (Scottsdale 1999) features seven enormous fish—defined by masonry, glass block, rusted metal rod, and river rock—that "swim" along an undulating sound wall. Simon Donovan's *Diamondback Bridge* (Tucson, 2002) resembles a huge walk-through rattlesnake. A dramatic new work by Haddad/Drugan is

PAOLO SOLERI
Soleri Bridge and Plaza, 2010
Stainless steel, concrete and integral concrete colors, earth cast panels, cast bronze bell with cast aluminum armature, drip walls with shotcrete
PHOTO: BILL TIMMERMAN, COURTESY SCOTTSDALE PUBLIC ART

KEVIN BARRY
Tributary Wall, 1999
steel, rock-filled gabion structure, glass block, uplights
PHOTO: EDWIN BENOIT, COURTESY SCOTTSDALE PUBLIC ARTZ

LAURA HADDAD
AND TOM D RUGAN
Watermark Gargoyles, 2010
14-foot aluminum sculptures, cast concrete, tile inlay, mineral paint, river rock, quarried rock, Ironwood trees, desert grasses
PHOTO: DIEGO CEJA, COURTESY SCOTTSDALE PUBLIC ART

Watermark Gargoyles (Scottsdale, 2010), a series of five huge aluminum horse heads that gush water into a wash during Arizona's rare but powerful monsoon storms.

The firms Will Bruder, De Bartolo Architects, and Richärd + Bauer are known for their sensitive and contextual incorporation of metal into public and domestic architecture. Enterprises working collaboratively include Art in Metal U.S.A. (Tempe), which offers an interdisciplinary team of designers, painters, metal fabricators and casters, and clay sculptors. Bronze Smith Fine Art Foundry & Gallery in Prescott Valley has operated since the 1980s, works with sculptors in the Phoenix area, and allows visitors to witness bronze casting firsthand.

To view fine jewelry, metalwork, and sculpture—past and present—museums in the environs of Phoenix, Flagstaff, and Tucson are worth visiting. Danita Sewell, costume curator at the Phoenix Art Museum, pairs fashion installations with displays of jewelry and *bibelots*, such as perfume flasks, cigarette cases, and minaudieres.

The Great Recession may have taken its toll on the city, state, and region, but these craft artists are proving to be resilient and inspiring survivors.

The new Musical Instrument Museum in North Scottsdale displays keyboard, wind, string, and percussion instruments—many of which incorporate metal in their construction—from across the globe and the centuries. Scottsdale's historic Cattle Track Compound (run by arts maven Janie Ellis) combines working studios with gallery spaces that occupy a cluster of authentic adobe houses. Working within this context, Arizona metalsmiths are creating pieces that are diverse, delightful, useful, and mesmerizing. Sean Hill of Tucson fabricates delicate cages of metal that he fills with opaque or translucent resin—the effect is that of lacquer or stained glass. Kit Carson of New River repurposes vintage Arizona license plates or whiskey barrel straps into cuff bracelets embellished with hand-engraved

gold milagros and locally mined turquoise and gemstones. Elizabeth Frank of Tucson uses bits of recycled metal in her mixed-media assemblages, which range from wall-mounted to wearable. Tracey Saliba (Cave Creek) creates, in her words, "girly" figural sculptures that blend metal mesh, bright powder-coated finishes, recycled metals, and glass. Dan McCabe of Prescott and Cathi Borthwick of Flagstaff use iron, steel, and bronze in a direct fashion. McCabe sculpts framed, wall-hung reliefs adorned with squiggly bits of bronze that resemble pasta. He also fabricates edgy steel furniture. Borthwick, a proud member of the Arizona Artist Blacksmith Association, specializes in wrought iron home accessories and fixtures that make subtle allusions to desert flora and fauna. These artists list the Scottsdale Arts Festival (begun 1971) as one of the year's top events. The Yuma Symposium (on-going for more than 30 years) is a popular gathering held annually in an Arizona/California border town. Each year, the Heard Museum Guild sponsors both an Indian Fair & Market and a Spanish Market. Local newspapers, tourist brochures, and specialized publications (for example, *Arizona Highways* magazine) all track the Arizona metals scene to some extent. Since 1990, *Phoenix Home & Garden* magazine has included a "Masters of the Southwest" series with profiles of artists, designers, and craft workers in diverse media.

The story of the phoenix is one of a mythical bird rising from fire and ash to live anew. So, too the beautiful work that Arizona's metalsmiths create with flame, heat, vision, and expertise is continually being reborn. The Great Recession may have taken its toll on the city, state, and region, but these craft artists are proving to be resilient and inspiring survivors.

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KIT CARSON
"Big Cuff" Bracelet, 2012
paint patina, steel from 1960s Navajo shed, african sugilite and carico lake turquoise (Nevada), sterling silver, 22k gold
5 ½ x 4"

DAN MCCABE
"Two-Faced" Bench 2011
silicon bronze, stainless steel, french brown patina
16 x 52 x 20"
PHOTO: MARCHETTIPHOTO.COM

Furthermore:
Mary Lu Moore, ed., *Southwestern Indian Arts & Crafts* (KC Publications, 1983).

George Sawyer
Pattern Recognition

BY ANDREA DINOTO

"ART IS A business and art is a product." George Sawyer, master of the patterned metalwork technique known as *mokume gane* (literally, "wood-grained metal"), speaks with a certain authority, having shaped a self-sustaining, decades-long art-jewelry career. Primarily a bridal line of engagement and wedding rings for men and women, Sawyer's work sells in nearly 80 jewelry stores and craft galleries, nationwide and abroad. "It used to be twice that many," he adds a bit ruefully, noting that "the recession has really cut in"—not to mention the escalating price of metals. Still, owing to Sawyer's laser-like focus on the art/design/marketing trinity that makes for good business, he has kept his Minneapolis-based studio humming, staffed with three full-time artisan goldsmiths, a production manager, a marketing manager (Sawyer's wife, Dee Dee) and an accountant. Sawyer's success owes largely to the retail jewelry market's embrace of his signature style, one that is based on a 17th-century Japanese method of forming decorative holloware from metal laminate. In Sawyer's adaptation of *mokume gane*, the exquisite moire effect is achieved, he says, via "the most labor-intensive of all metalsmithing techniques." He explains that the subtle patterning of silver, copper and gold results from a multistep process. Firstly, a chunk of metal called a billet, sort of a precious *petit four*, is created by layering sheets of different-colored metals. The billet is compressed, heated, rolled, and folded back on itself to create radial and biaxial symmetries, then forged. In the penultimate step, the billet is sliced into strips that reveal the through-pattern. The strips are then formed into seamless gold-lined rings or used in the design of pendants, necklaces, and brooches. Sawyer's studio produces work in 12 different color variations and in laminates ranging from half- to non-gold.

George Sawyer meets with a client at his Minneapolis-based studio and gallery.

"The average person doesn't know what they're looking at," says Sawyer.

Rings range in price from about $1,100 for a simple band to upwards of $10,000 for those set with diamonds. Because the bridal market traditionally demands "white" metal, Sawyer's line complies with alloys of silver, grey gold, platinum and palladium. For one-of-a-kind pieces—in a range of $50,000 to $60,000—Sawyer sometimes incorporates unusual cut stones, such as those from the Munsteiner atelier.

Sawyer's initial, if unlikely, experience with metalwork was a job in the late 1960s with Kar-Kraft, a small Detroit firm that built high-end racing cars. In his spare time, he took jewelry classes and quickly realized where his true passion lay. By the 1970s, Sawyer was doing custom jewelry design, but his long-time fascination with Japanese metalwork led him to an explore *mokume gane*. He was the first American jeweler, he says, to crack the puzzle of the complex process.[1]

At first, Sawyer showed at just a few galleries, "enough to support me and a helper," he says. But in 1985, he attended his first JAC show in New York as an "emerging designer," and found retail jewelers eager to place orders, an indication that his work had marketing potential beyond the craft world. "It was a great learning experience in how to sell, how to partner, do PR, learn what stores expect—all of those." By the mid-1990s he'd built up to a staff of some 15 people and had revamped his technique—including designing new tools—to improve speed and quality.

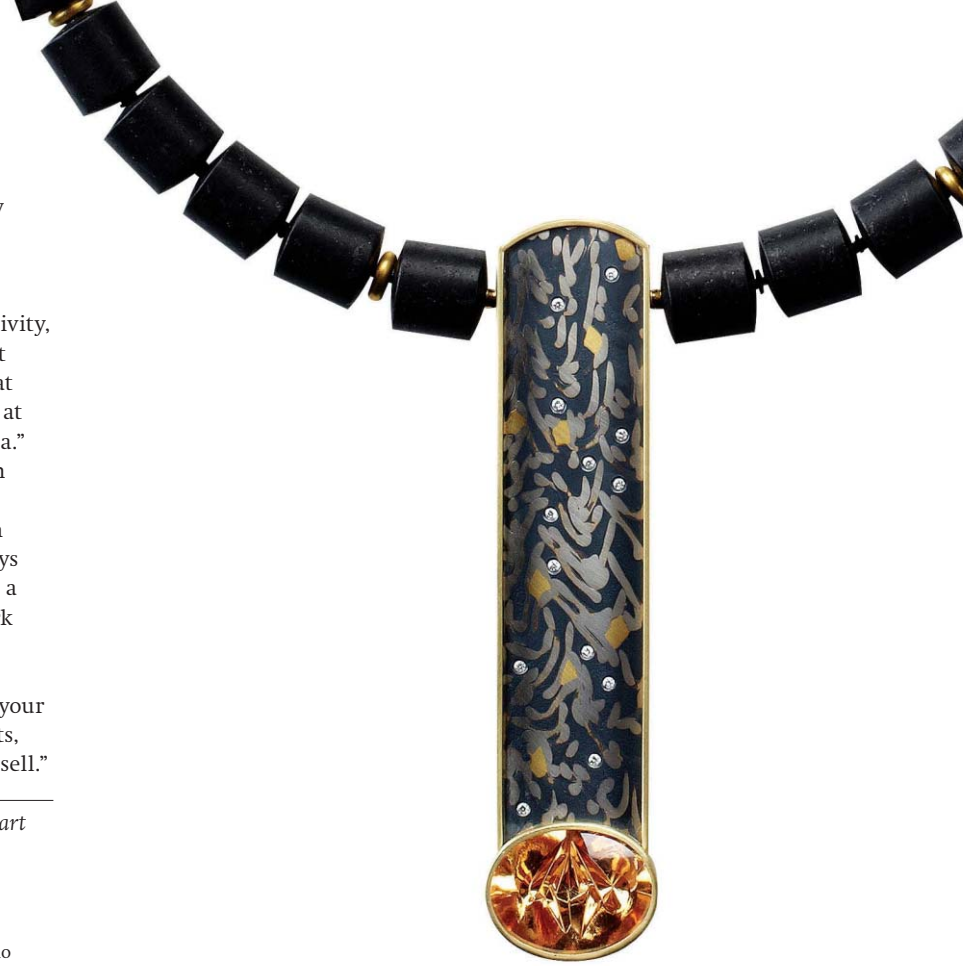
Sawyer's interactive website, complete with a video explaining the *mokume gane* method, is one of his most effective marketing tools. It both conveys his "story" and helps to train and educate store staff, who must explain the technical process to customers. "The average person doesn't know what they're looking at," he says, noting that his version of *mokume gane* is unique and proprietary, enabling him to create effects, such as "mirror image," no other jeweler working in the process can. The difficulty, he says, is to train people "to look close enough at a very small object to see the art." To that end, Sawyer has posted a wealth of images, including two of rings that illustrate "Koi" and "Wabi Sabi," his most recent design innovations. Koi, named for the varicolored Japanese carp, has a satin-finish pattern suggestive of sunlight dappled on water; Wabi Sabi, evoking the Zen concept of perfection in imperfection, is deeply

etched with a relief texture of weathered tree bark. The ability to achieve such effects is the result, says Sawyer, of "forty years of refinement."

Sawyer urges young art jewelers who aspire to become self-supporting to focus on four main objectives: originality, creativity, craftsmanship, and marketability. Look at commercial jewelry, he urges, "to see what the public sees. Your technique should be at least as good as what's coming from China." Enter competitions: It leads to recognition from galleries and stores. Participate in shows: You'll develop networks and get an education in customers' needs. Finally, says Sawyer, join design groups; learn to build a website and to price and protect your work with hallmarks (as he does) so that you'll be able to license and sell at a later date. "Copyrights," he says providentially, "are your retirement fund." But of course, he admits, "In the end, it's the magic that makes art sell."

Andrea DiNoto is a New York–based writer on art and design.

1. Sawyer based his initial research on detailed reporting by the design partners Hiroko Sato Pijanowski and Gene Michael Pijanowski, who had observed the process in Japan. http://www.silversmithing.com/1mokume.htm



Top: *Firefly's Garden* (brooch/pendant), 2011
pendant: 18k yellow gold with Winter Koi™ 14k gray gold, black patinaed fine silver, 18k yellow gold detail, Hessonite garnet by Tom Munsteiner, diamonds; necklace: black granite, 22k gold
PHOTO: ALLEN BROWN

Ring Set, 2012
mirror image, pattern matched Mokume set, 500pd and sterling silver, platinum mounts, diamond
PHOTO: ALLEN BROWN

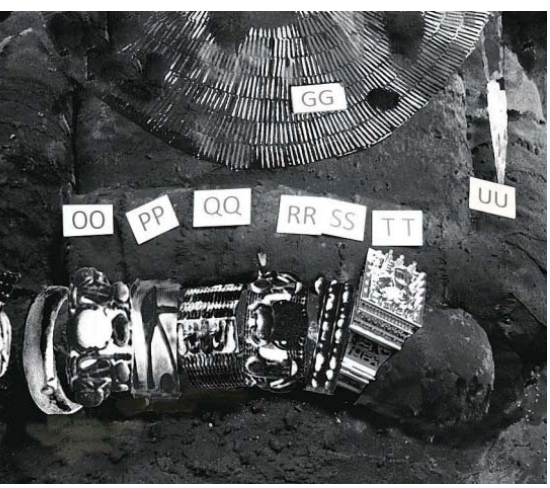
From Tutankhamen's Tomb

A New Discovery

BY KENT P. STREAVER, PH.D., FNAS, GAA, DMV
(As imagined by metalsmith and Egyptophile Steven Parker)

WHEN HOWARD CARTER descended the newly uncovered stone steps leading down to the tomb of King Tutankhamen in 1922, his were not the first feet to have trod that path. As Carter studied the wall barring entrance to the tomb, he noticed two sets of seals: the original embossed by priests at the young pharaoh's entombment, circa 1324 B.C., and another set added later, marking a repair after violation by early looters. Upon his entry into the tomb's antechamber, he found not only wondrous artifacts, but also significant disarray left by those thieves. What priceless objects may have been removed, and what became of them?

As an archeologist, I have long been haunted by this question which, for centuries, has seemed unanswerable, that is until a recent, deeply puzzling yet thrilling discovery shook me to the core. In the spring of 2011, I was traveling in Egypt under the auspices of the Imhotep Foundation. The circumstances surrounding the discovery of Tutankhamen's tomb always held great fascination for me, and my researches have led me to believe that there was more to be learned about the tomb's contents than published reports have allowed. Although I felt on the verge of an important breakthrough, my year's research in Egypt was beset by difficulties, from the Foundation's fiscal problems to the demonstrations in the streets of Cairo and subsequent political revolution. And yet, it was those very demonstrations that led to the subject of this paper.



The uncovered arms of the mummy, revealing a previously unknown bracelet, labeled "TT" DIGITAL IMAGE CONSTRUCTION: STEVEN PARKER

Early in 2011, I had come to the Cairo Museum to present my credentials in order to review archival documents that might aid my quest for Tut's missing artifacts. Suddenly, everyone within the museum rushed out into the streets, where a mass of angry (yet soon to be jubilant) humanity was launching a protest for democracy in Tahrir Square. The din and chaos outside was overwhelming. Alone in the museum, fearing for the safety of its treasures, I began searching for safe storage areas where I might be able to hide the most valuable pieces from looters. I soon found myself in the depths of the lowest basement in front of an unmarked door. I tried the handle and it swung open to reveal a small, storage space that seemed to have been overlooked for decades. The dank smell of antiquity filled my nostrils. To be sure, no human being had been in this room in recent memory. I heard voices, footsteps above in the museum's galleries, then the sound of breaking glass. Swiftly, I stepped into the room and closed the door behind me. As I pressed my ear against the door listening for rioters, my hand found a light switch. Flipping it on, a dim glow from a dangling incandescent bulb permeated the space, and I was startled by an ominous scratching sound that came from behind. Slowly I turned, and crept step by step toward a huge feral rat glaring at me from atop a stack of moldering leather portfolios. I struck out to grab him, but he easily evaded me and escaped into the dark depths of boxes and piles.

I dusted off and opened the portfolio the rat had been sitting on. At first I was disappointed to find it full of the iconic yet all too familiar photographs by Harry Burton, the only photographer permitted inside Tut's tomb after Carter's discovery. I had studied all these images carefully at the Metropolitan Museum in New York. But as I flipped through the yellowing prints, one of them caught my attention. At first I was not sure what disturbed me about the picture, but I soon noticed that the photograph I held in my hand was different from its published version. Here was the famous photo showing the mummy's arms bedecked with bracelets, but I counted nine, not the eight bracelets so well known to Egyptologists the world over. I immediately realized that while I had been searching for artifacts lost in ancient times, I had at this moment stumbled across a case of modern-day tomb tampering—that ninth bracelet has never appeared in any public documentation. Closer examination of the portfolio revealed two other photos of the missing bracelet, one as it was carried away from the tomb, and another as it appears in two decorative panels from the tomb itself. These photographs and panels were the only evidence that this piece had ever existed.

Detail of the decorative panel at the back of Tutankhamen's throne; note the symbolic representation of the bracelet on Tutankhamen's wrist
DIGITAL IMAGE CONSTRUCTION: STEVEN PARKER

Why, and how, did this bracelet disappear? Could this be one of the mysteries the Foundation was created to investigate? I vowed to discover the whereabouts of this extraordinary piece. Gathering the photos to protect them from damage or theft, I carefully found my way out of the museum without encountering the intruders on the upper floors.

Days later, after order had been restored to Tahrir Square, I set out to the museum to see if I could revisit that old storeroom. On the way, an extraordinary, nay miraculous, event occurred. I saw a young boy, surrounded by several officials, holding what appeared to be a statuette that I had seen weeks before in the museum. As I drew closer, I overheard the boy explaining he'd found the object, which had indeed been looted from the museum, lying in a nearby trash heap. Absentmindedly, as I pondered the oddity of this situation, I literally stumbled into another large pile of refuse and debris. As I put my hand out to break my fall, it came down upon a small, hard object, causing me a stab of pain. I withdrew my hand expecting to find a piece of glass or rusty fragment impaled in my palm. Instead, I gasped in wonderment! Here was what appeared to be the magnificent ninth bracelet of Burton's original photograph, its golden band and scarab perfectly intact! How the king's bracelet found its way to my hands I may never know. But fearing for its safety, I immediately slipped the priceless ornament into my jacket pocket and hastened back to my rooms, where I began to photograph and document the piece. As I examined the hieroglyphics inlaid into the bracelet's sides and bottom, I realized with mounting excitement that this was no mere ornament: it had been designed as a spiritual guide for the king. Its massive dome actually contained a functional clockwork mechanism activated by a cleverly concealed switch. The hieroglyphics around the bracelet read: *"Answers can be found here Ask your question of*

One of Howard Carter's workers at the site carrying the bracelet away from Tutankhamen's tomb
DIGITAL IMAGE CONSTRUCTION: STEVEN PARKER

Could this uncanny bracelet be foretelling its own destiny—and perhaps my own?!

STEVEN PARKER
Egyptian Bracelet, 2011
vermeil, brass, steel, lapis, rutilated quartz, Colorit®
3 ¾ x 3 x 1 ⅞"
PHOTO: JOHN BIGELOW TAYLOR

STEVEN PARKER
Egyptian Bracelet, 2011
detail of uraeus cobra array and scarab
PHOTO: JOHN BIGELOW TAYLOR

STEVEN PARKER
Egyptian Bracelet, 2011
detail of mechanism with winding key
PHOTO: JOHN BIGELOW TAYLOR

the scarab Seek the snake" Created by..." (here, the meaning of the glyphs were unclear)

Inlaid around the scarab itself are the hieroglyphs representing "Yes and No." A third glyph—repeated around the dome is the *ankh*, ancient Egyptian symbol of life—I took to stand for life's uncertainty, hence its meaning could be inferred as "Maybe."

I could not resist—I carefully wound the clockwork a quarter turn, and voiced the question uppermost in my mind: "Will this discovery help my sponsor fulfill their goals?" As I watched the scarab revolve slowly on its ancient spring searching for the answer, I imagined the myriad ways such a device could benefit mankind; but, when the scarab came to a stop the answer it pointed to was "No." I was astonished. Could this uncanny bracelet be foretelling its own destiny—and perhaps my own?! In that moment my mind reeled and I felt myself falling into a deep yet oddly aware state of semi-consciousness. Perhaps I dreamt what then happened, but the memory remains vivid: My eyes were focused on the bracelet as I heard the door to my rooms open and someone approach with a dragging, scraping sound. I saw a hand, bandaged with dirty linens, gently remove the bracelet from my field of vision. Then I heard that same dragging sound recede into the hallway.

I awoke the next morning to find the door ajar and the bracelet gone! Had one of the protesters, wounded in confrontations with the authorities and bandaged with whatever dirty scraps of cloth were available, followed me looking for something of value to steal and resell? This was the only explanation my mind could accept. With a great sense of loss, I left Cairo determined to record what meager documentation I had assembled during those brief hours in which I was privileged to examine the bracelet. The results are what you see in this article. I can only hope the bracelet will resurface someday, and that I will have another opportunity to pose my unanswered questions to this wondrous artifact, which once adorned the wrist of Tutankhamen.

Steven Parker is a jeweler who maintains a studio in New York City and teaches at the Fashion Institute of Technology.

Furthermore:
www.acmeclockworks.com

Petra Class:
The Freedom of Limits

BY PATRICIA HARRIS AND DAVID LYON

Lapis and Gold Brooches, 2011
lapis lazuli, 22k and 18k gold
2 ⅜ x 1 ⅛ x ½" and 5 x 5 x ¾"

PETRA CLASS KNOWS who she is and what she does. "I am a metalsmith," she declares. "I really love metal." It is a simple yet profound statement to sum up the gifted artist's three-decade-long career, which began with the production of functional tableware and evolved toward gold-and-stone abstract jewelry that shares formal concerns with sculptor Richard Serra's monumental works.

Following a classical art-school education in her native Germany, Class began designing and making tableware in the Berlin studio of the late Axel Gobbesso in the early 1980s. "Tableware is very technically challenging and that interested me when I studied it and when I made it," she says. But she grew restless making vessels and flatware, so after three years with Gobbesso, she took her considerable skills and set up her own jewelry studio. The immediacy of making jewelry, as opposed to spending two weeks raising and completing a teapot, was liberating. Yet the formal and technical concerns of tableware informed her early pieces. "I made very oversized jewelry at the time," she says. "It was basically wearable tableware."

As she began to establish her identity as an independent artist, she retained the mindset of an artisan. "My early career was very applied, making usable objects," she says. "I took that with me to jewelry making. I said, 'I'm a goldsmith. That's what I do. I make ornamentation for people. I work with gold.'"

Class embraced one of the most ancient of impulses—to beautify the body—and deliberately chose to limit her materials to those traditionally defined as precious—gold and silver, of course, but also gemstones. "To limit myself in the work, at least to a certain degree, helps me focus," she says.

It is the mark of an artist to push the boundaries of the possible. While remaining true to her calling as a worker in precious materials, Class has used her vision and skill, together with self-imposed limits, to create a distinctive body of work within the tradition. Class's clear sense of purpose has held firm throughout her career, although the work arising from that sensibility has gradually shifted from a pure-metals approach to more abstract artistic concerns. For many years, Class worked in hollow sculptural forms

From top:
Brooch, 1997
sterling silver, 22k bimetal
2 ¾ x 1 ½ x ½"

Brooch, 1999
22k and 18k gold, rough diamonds
2 ⅜ x 1 ⅛ x ⅜"

Brooch, 2002
diamond, pearl, ruby, sapphire, coral, pearl, citrine, tourmaline, 22k and 18k gold
2 ½ x 1 ⅛ x ⅜"

Brooch, 2003
tourmaline, 22k and 18k gold
2 ¾ x 1 ⅛ x ½"

constructed of gold and silver. "The work was all about shape," she recalls. "During that period I would see fish, or a bunch of vegetables in the grocery store, and it would pop a shape in my mind. Then I would go and make a necklace of it."

By the mid-1990s, that sculptural metalwork had evolved into silver and bi-metal elliptical forms that played with contrasts of finish (matte and polished) and color. Class also began to interject gold elements in her work, setting them like jewels in silver bezels. Her sterling and 22k gold bimetal brooches and bracelet from this period appear to have been constructed of smooth, rounded beach pebbles that have been gilded.

Class had begun experimenting with gemstones even before her move to San Francisco in 1991. At first she used natural rough diamonds because they were affordable for a young artist just getting started. "As far as these stones are concerned, they are the most like metal," Class explains. "They can go through acid. They can go through heat. They are nearly indestructible and are pretty much colorless." Although she has no images of those early works, Class describes them as "big metal shapes with stones popped on top."

By the turn of the millennium, Class was blending biomorphic metal forms with an increasingly varied color palette of stones. But the brooches from 1999 appear restrained compared with those made just a few years later in which color runs riot.

One brooch from 2002 truly represents a turning point in Class's approach to design. It retains the sensibility of her earlier work in gold and silver while foreshadowing the direction she would take over the next decade. The gold form of the brooch echoes the curvilinear hollow bodies of her pre-gemstone jewelry, while the flurry of stems issuing from the bottom at once resemble the tentacles of squid and the branching of vegetation. Those branches yield a strange fruit, indeed: diamond, emerald, tourmaline, pearl, operculum (catseye), coral, citrine and ruby. The artist seems to be reveling in the colors, shapes, and textures of the gems.

From this point on, Class began to use gems as the focus of her pieces, rather than simply accents, and the metal began to serve as a vehicle for presenting them. As a further development, color, more than metal per se, became her medium, and she began to compose gemstones in a matrix tied together with gold struts. In the tourmaline and gold brooch from 2002, she treats the stones and stone-like gold "gems" as equals, pulling them together in an abstract composition that plays with size as well as shape. The multicolored stones of a 2003 brooch swim together in an aggregation of color, like a mass of frog's eggs shimmering in a still pool. The gems of these new matrices are almost invariably set within bezels. "It was really to tie it all together by giving everything a little gold frame," she says.

Since embracing colored stones, Class has shifted her compositional focus from singular form to establishing a dynamic of color and rhythm. "Color is a very strong impression for me," Class says. "When I go out in my

Blue Yellow Mosaic Brooch, 2008
aquamarine, yellow sapphire,
22k and 18k gold
2 ¾ x 1 ½ x ⅜"

garden—flowers in bloom that are just popping out—I really enjoy that. I get a huge stimulation from colors." But Class is not one to dump the whole crayon box into a single piece. By restricting the work to a limited palette, she keeps the emphasis on the formal dynamics and interrelationships among the mounted gems.

She describes her creative process as "going into a zone." She sits down with a pile of stones and a piece of paper to sketch. "I see the kinds of relationships I want to create," she explains. She will try to balance rough and refined stones, sizes, shapes, and even shades. Once she establishes relationships between the stones, she decides how she ants to connect them. The choices can produce profoundly different effects. Packing stones tightly creates an appearance of mosaic, as if the stones are fitted together. Arranging them with more negative space, as she often does establishes an open sense of rhythm as the eye follows the connections, lingers on the stones, and skips around the composition.

These "mosaic" compositions, Class says, were originally inspired by a Piet Mondrian seascape she saw at the Guggenheim Museum. The Mondrian original, she recalls, was a gray-blue-green abstract composition of waves and a boat landing based on a representational scene. Early Mondrian, with its embrace of enhanced colors and intuitive grasp of geometric form, provided Class with an inspiring template for her work.

Since embracing colored stones, Class has shifted her compositional focus from singular form to establishing a dynamic of color and rhythm.

Though she may share an aesthetic kinship with Mondrian, Class actually handles color very differently. The *Sapphire Mosaic Bracelet* (2011) represents her style at its most refined. Each of the nine panels linked to form the bracelet has a different composition of seven stones. The effect is of a lively and intricate visual rhythm: seven beats to the measure, nine measures to the phrase. Such compositions, she says, are often translations of whatever music she is listening to in the studio. "Different rhythms come out when you listen to Bach versus Charlie Parker,"

she says. “Then that abstraction can be translated into pieces of jewelry.”

The mosaic jewelry offers Class seemingly infinite possibilities for color variations. She admits to sometimes being “persistently stuck with one idea. My brain is interested in it again and again.” Happily, her fascination with mosaics has led to a glorious series of structurally similar monochromatic compositions, each using different hued stones. Indeed, as time has gone on, Class’s gem work has become predominantly monochromatic, and recent collections are categorized by dominant color.

Class recalls that a friend, on seeing images of her latest work with lapis lazuli, joked, “Petra’s in her blue phase.” She confesses to being captivated both by the stone’s intense color, as well as its historical associations. The old frescoes in German churches, she notes, used ground lapis lazuli as a blue pigment. In fact, the stone has been in continuous use in jewelry, and in art, for about 6,000 years. “The connection between a material and mankind fascinates me,” she admits, hoping wistfully that she can one day visit the region of Afghanistan where lapis has been mined since antiquity.

One of the striking things about lapis is its opacity; thus,

Class’s gem work has become predominantly monochromatic, and recent collections are categorized by dominant color.

Sapphire Mosaic Bracelet, 2011
rough and faceted sapphire,
22k and 18k gold
7 ½ x 1 ⅛ x ¼"

Lapis Bracelet, 2012
lapis lazuli, 22k and 18k gold
7 ¼ x 2 ½ x ¼"

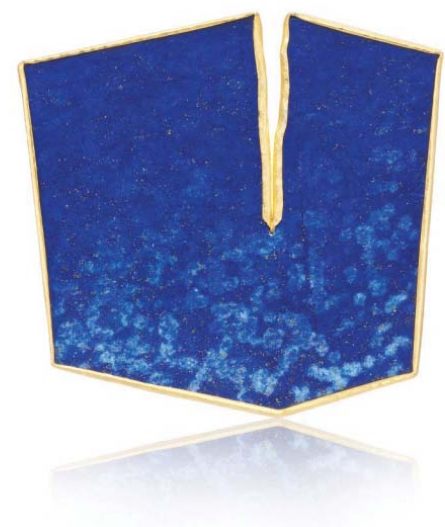
it is reflective but not refractive. Inclusions of pyrite in the deep blue stone appear as flecks of gold. Class responds to lapis as if it were a sacred material. In some of her early pieces, she pairs nuggets of lapis with gold "jewels" of similar size in unconventional prong settings that appear to float in mid air.

But Class's minimalist use of lapis slabs secured in gold frames represents the most significant shift in her approach to jewelry since she made gems her focus a decade earlier. Class credits the change in her thinking to an exhibit of Richard Serra drawings in which figures were rendered in black, and appeared as "humongous, not quite rectangular, not quite square forms." "To my eye they almost looked blue, they were so black," she says, "and I thought of lapis."

To compare Class's intimately scaled work to Serra's monumental sculptures of rolled steel may seem far-fetched, yet her trapezoidal forms—essentially squares and rectangles drawn out along one dimension—convey a similar meditative solemnity. The rise and fall of line in her lapis bracelet has a steady grace. The gold frame for each piece focuses the eye on this "stone of the sky," as *lapis lazuli* translates from the Latin. It's an accurate description, as the deep mottled blue color does actually resemble a nighttime sky, the flecks of pyrite an infinity of stars.

This stone's celestial properties are displayed with vivid intensity in Class's recent series of lapis brooches. The piece de resistance of Class's lapis group is a brooch made from a notched, irregular hexagon. The stone seems uncannily on the verge of shattering, yet Class holds the tension in check with a gold frame, as if the artist's hand has intervened at the last moment to preserve the fragile beauty of a mysterious stone.

Lapis Split Brooch, 2012
lapis lazuli, 22k and 18k gold
2 ⅜ x 2 ⅜ x ⅜"



Writers and critics Patricia Harris and David Lyon live in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

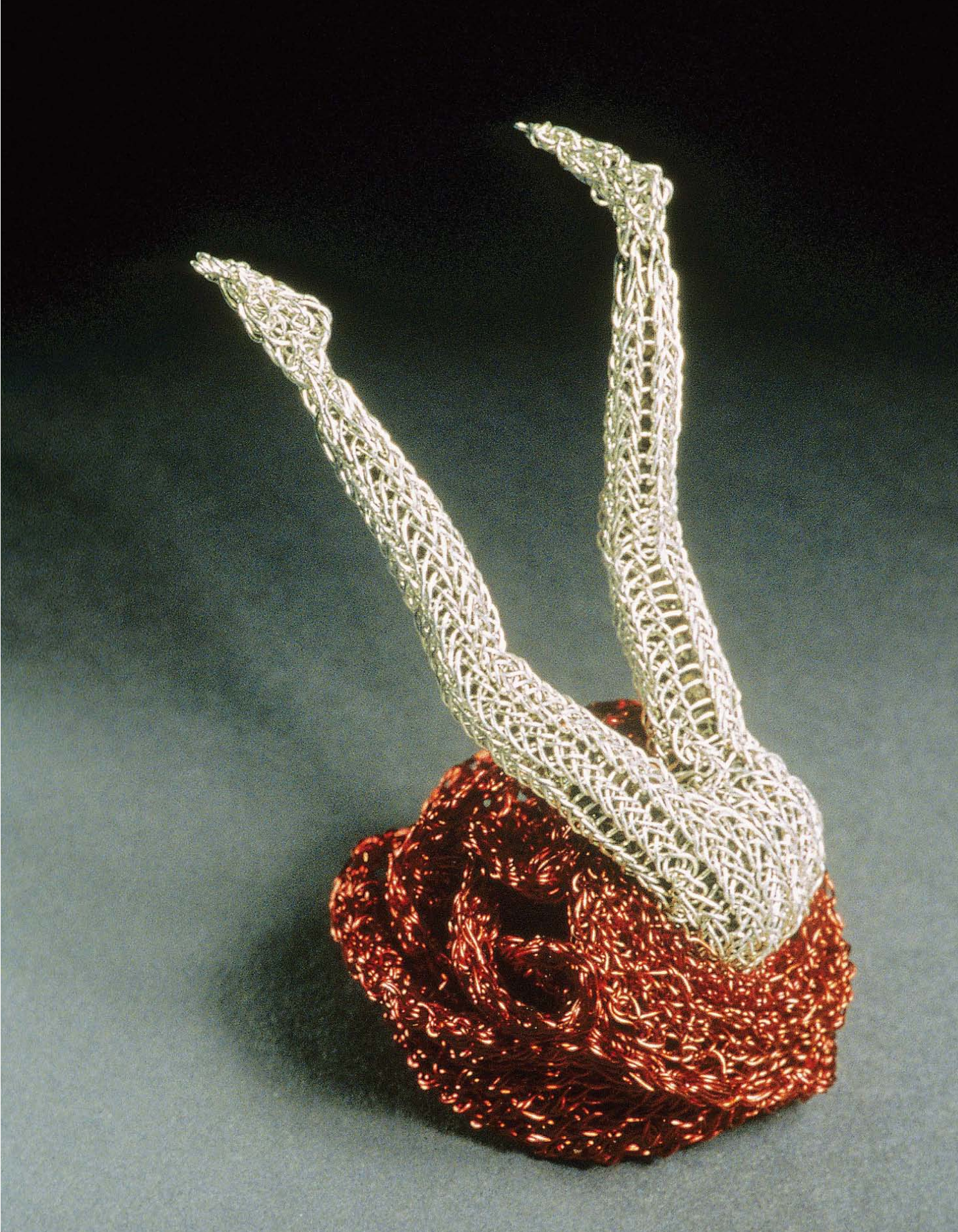
Furthermore:
www.petraclass.net

High Wired!
The Daring Art of Barbara Stutman

BY BARBARA ISHERWOOD

Empty Bezel Neckpiece EB3, 2006
colored copper wire, magnets
11 ½ x 11 x ⅝"
PHOTO: ANTHONY MCLEAN

Is Hot Stuff Delicious? (ring and brooch sculpture), 1997
fine silver, colored copper wire, black peppercorns
3 ⅛ x 3 x 2"
PHOTO: PIERRE FAUTEUX



In an Alien Framework (neckpiece), 1993
fine silver, sterling silver, copper,
flax, elastic, rayon, lacquer paint
12 ¼ x 5 ½ x 1 ½"
PRIVATE COLLECTION.
PHOTO: PIERRE FAUTEUX

Raped (neckpiece), 1993
fine silver, sterling silver, copper,
brass, colored copper wire, cotton
11 ¾ x 7 x 1"
COLLECTION MUSEUM OF ARTS AND
DESIGN, NEW YORK
PHOTO: PIERRE FAUTEUX

BARBARA STUTMAN IS a woman of contradictions. While her jewelry is big and bold, she is petite and elegant. She creates sumptuous adornment using copper wire, beads and vinyl lacing. She enlists textile techniques, traditionally considered "women's work," to send up the conventions surrounding jewelry, both in terms of its production and its role as signifier of wealth and possession—not just what is possessed, but who, and by whom.

Stutman first burst onto the international jewelry scene in the early 1990s, making waves with a body of shockingly visceral pieces—her subjects included rape and incest—representing her take on the female condition. That a nice Jewish girl from Montreal should end up sparking an irate letter to the editor of this magazine isn't all that surprising.[1] Of all the cities in Canada, the one most likely to produce a jeweler of such unconventional inclinations is, in fact, Montreal. The cultural capital of French Canada has an international flair that is unique in North America. Fashion is more adventurous there. People stay out later. The avant-garde music scene is without parallel. The Quebec government invests in the arts, viewed as vital components of La Belle Province's distinctive identity. All this adds up to a forward-thinking arts scene.

Stutman's own family mirrored this encouraging environment. One sister is a noted gallerist; another is a painter, as was her mother. She has cousins in dance and theatre. As a young woman she took classes with noted Canadian artist and educator Arthur Lismer, but her first career was as a physiotherapist. Art kept tugging at her sleeve, however, and in the 1970s she returned to fine-art studies at Montreal's Saidye Bronfman Centre.

Looking back, Stutman recognizes the seeds of her later interest in female identity in her earliest work, Pop-art style paintings that were included in the first Artfemme national touring exhibition in 1975. She switched from painting to jewelry after seeing an exhibition of students' jewelry that included Flora Book (then Flora Reitman), whose work had a bold, dramatic quality that appealed to Stutman's developing aesthetic. "I have to do this,"[2] she remembers thinking. She enrolled in her first jewelry-making course and was soon creating large asymmetrical forms in silver, inspired by Japanese fashion.

The walls of Stutman's studio, housed in the top floor of her Montreal home, are papered with a fascinating array of clippings and postcards that tell the tale of such inspirations, ranging from avant-garde designer clothing to ethnic jewelry. She was particularly attracted to African jewelry for its monumental forms, clever use of non-precious materials, and its role as signifier of power and magic. "It's not just for decoration. In their constellation it plays a part in their identity."

The simplicity she admired in African adornment informed the "Provocation" series, presented in her first solo exhibition in 1988. In *Vertebrae Necklace* she recreated a snake's skeleton on a massive scale, bucking traditional European notions of discreet proportion and preciousness in favor of bold, rhythmic,

Looking back, Stutman recognizes the seeds of her later interest in female identity in her earliest work.

evocative forms. Other pieces in the collection also pushed the boundaries of size and material. In *Neckpiece*, patinated brass rods are held around the body with black rubber tubing, a contemporary (and more comfortable!) take on African neck rings.

These early pieces were fabricated. The move to the wire and textile techniques for which Stutman is known was driven by several factors. One was the example of Mary Lee Hu's use of basketry techniques to create sculptural adornment; another was the physical stress of hammering, which aggravated Stutman's fibromyalgia. But most significant in the evolution of her aesthetic was her enlistment of textile processes for jewelry making, a symbolic gesture, "...in solidarity with women who, through the ages, were not allowed to go to the academies and participate. They would find ways, through embroidery, knitting, quilting, to express themselves."

Stutman learned how to knit and crochet from one such woman, her Granny Rubin. "The minute she and her friends sat down, they would open their knitting bags and knit while they were talking. You'd hear the needles flying," Stutman recalls. She increased her technical repertoire through workshops as well as many hours spent developing her own methods. "I just decide that I want to do something, and I find a way to do it."

Bringing traditional craft-based media into the "fine art" world was a strategy adopted by a number of pioneering feminist artists; Judy Chicago with ceramics, Miriam Schapiro and Faith Ringgold with quilting, to name just a few. Where Stutman surprised people (including herself) was in the startling imagery that emerged from her flying needles.

In the 1993 series, "Plotting Our Progress/L'état de la femme," Stutman presented a raw, feminist vision of the place of women in the late 20th century. The most disturbing piece, *Raped*, came about after hearing of the rape of a family friend. Metal, the material that for centuries has been made to tell a tale of luxury and privilege, is here twisted into a searing image of pain and violation. Who can look at this symbol of woman, bound, blindfolded, bloodied, and not feel rage? That it takes the form of a neckpiece is a brutal irony: a piece of jewelry traditionally purchased by a man to adorn his woman has been twisted into the savage yoke that binds her. And to use crochet, that time-honored ladies' pastime, to make this statement, makes it doubly stinging.

The theme of bondage recurs in *In An Alien Framework*, a neckpiece sourced directly from the artist's own experience giving birth in the 1970s. The image is that of the life-giving experience turned upside down: the mother-about-to-be appears trapped, her splayed legs twisted above her head and locked at the ankles to form a neckpiece that is also a metaphor for Stutman's experience at the hands of the then male-dominated medical profession.

"My antennae were out about different aspects of being female," she says. She created a piece dealing with incest, in which the wearer/victim controls and exacts revenge upon

On Being Female, 4 Brooch/Tampon Holder Set, 1993
colored copper wire, brass, copper, fine silver, spandex, tampons
average size 7 ½ x 3 ¾ x 1 ½"
PHOTO: PIERRE FAUTEUX

Sapphire Purple Pendant, for a Maharajah, Royal Neckpiece R1, 2002
colored copper wire, brass, vinyl lacing
5 ½ x 2 x 1 ½"
PHOTO: PAUL FOURNIER

Sapphire Standout, for a Maharajah,
Royal Neckpiece R17, 2004
fine silver, sterling silver, coloured copper wire, seedbeads, magnets
8 ⅞ x 7 x 1 ⅛"
PHOTO: ANTHONY MCLEAN

the perpetrator by pushing scatter-pin fasteners topped with knife handles through the male body of the brooch.

Conscious that she was breaking multiple taboos, Stutman was not without qualms about the risky course she'd set for herself. When doubts arose, she invoked her spiritual role models, artists who'd had the courage to use their art as a vehicle for dealing with tragedy. "Frida Kahlo inspired me, and Art Speiglman.[3] *Maus* was so powerful, it got you inside. I said if he can do the Holocaust in comic book form, I can do this. I don't know if I could have done it without him."

Friend and fellow jeweler, the late Enid Kaplan, was also supportive. It was with her encouragement that Stutman pursued international exposure, and was thus featured in "Risk and Reverence," *Metalsmith*'s 1995 Exhibition in Print. "Things mushroomed after that," says the artist, who began exhibiting internationally and being collected by such respected institutions as the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts and the Museum of Arts and Design in New York City.

For the next five years Stutman continued exploring the lot of the modern female, dissecting the limiting stereotypes promoted through mass media. *How to Become a Woman, Parts 1–3* (1996), from her "Negotiating Identity" exhibition, is a trio of torso-shaped brooches. *Torso No. 1* clasps an exotically shaped vessel behind her back. Her hands are bound, as in an ad for Jaipur perfume that Stutman had seen, in which a nude female torso is seen in a similar position, her wrists bound by the perfume bottle that is presumably to aid in her capture of a man—but just who is being captured here? In *Torso No. 2*, the perfume bottle has been exchanged for a bridal bouquet, now held proudly in front of the torso, which is clad in white wire—phase one of Mission: Catch a Man is complete! *Torso No. 3* represents the climax of the mission, with an infant replacing the bouquet. If there was a *Torso No. 4*, it would probably have its hands up to the elbows in a sink full of dirty dishes—the reality that sets in after the subscription to *Wedding Bells* magazine has expired.

Stutman's "Impaired Vision" pieces go head-to-head with the forces of commerce that dismember female images for the sake of selling soap. *Is Hot Stuff Delicious?*, a ring and brooch sculpture from 1997, references an ad for a flavored body wash designed to mask any traces of natural scent through chemical artifice. In the ad, the copy "What do women want? We want to be delicious" was paired with the image of a flower resembling female genitalia. In response Stutman created a pair of silver spool-knit legs that emerge from a red crocheted vagina/ blossom. But these little legs harbor a potent kick ready for anyone who dares take a bite—they're filled with peppercorns!

The "Royal" series that followed, begun in 2002, was created for her one-person exhibition, "Excessity". At first reading, the in-your-face social politics of Stutman's earlier work seems absent. But in the words of Canada's celebrated media critic, Marshall McLuhan, the medium is the message. Inspired by the sumptuous jewel-encrusted adornments of the Indian maharajahs, these massive bracelets and neckpieces embody that spirit of extravagant luxury, but in nonprecious materials—copper wire, seed beads and vinyl—thus sidestepping the environmental and social

devastation wrought by the mining of gold and precious gems. Yet in their outrageous size and postmodern smashup of contemporary materials and period form, Stutman's jewels appear as deliciously decadent as their Indian ancestors. Their vibrant tones, suggestive of emeralds, rubies, and sapphires, are achieved through a process not unlike the "optical mixing" used by the Neo-impressionist painter Georges Seurat, in which colors blend in the eye, rather than on the canvas. "I think like a painter," says Stutman. "I can make it a little darker by adding a thin dark wire, or make it lighter by adding a thin, pale colored wire." Various bead and wire combinations are worked into samples with materials noted for future reference.

Throughout her career Stutman has taken workshops in design and technique with Mary Lee Hu, Bob Ebendorf, Robert Lee Morris, Lois Betteridge and Heikki Seppa, among others. But it is Granny Rubin's good old crochet that has remained her basic technique, either densely worked into sculptural form, or loose and flexible, as in the "Messy Flower Brooch" series. Another favored technique is spool knitting, which she likes because it has the look of loop-in-loop chain, but is less labor-intensive to make. Stutman points out that, in order for it to come off, "you have to be meticulous," easier said than done, as students in her workshops often discover.

Stutman invests considerable time in refining her craft, evident in the polished forms and inventive designs of the past decade. *Empty Bezel Neckpiece 3*, made of linked crocheted wire circles in shades of fuchsia, tangerine, scarlet and plum, is a marvelous fusion of exotic color and geometric form. The apparent simplicity of the design belies the challenges of its construction. "They're difficult. It's almost like dressmaking," says the artist, who finds a lot of trial and error is required to ensure that neckpieces encircle the body without buckling or bulging. Her attention to detail is evident in a clever solution to fastening — magnets are enclosed in two beaded-wire pockets that neatly cup into each other, creating an invisible join.

Her latest series, "Pearls4Jeans" is a contemporary revision of the pearl necklace. Forget demure. In Stutman's book, pearls are dashing and ready to challenge the world of high society, through pairings with vinyl lacing, copper wire, and seed beads. Stutman continually surprises with inventive combinations of materials and daring concepts. By leaving her audience hanging, she guarantees they'll be there for the next show!

Messy Flower Brooch, 2009
colored copper wire, agate slice, tie, base metal
8 ¼ x 8 ¼ x 2 ½"
PHOTO: ANTHONY MCLEAN

Pearls4Jeans (reversible neckpiece), 2010
freshwater pearls, vinyl lacing, silver-plated and colored copper wire, seedbeads, magnets
6 x 6 ¼ x 1 ½"
PHOTO: ANTHONY MCLEAN

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1. Letters, *Metalsmith*, Spring 1998: An outraged reader objects to Metalsmith's featuring Stutman's *On Being Female: 4 Brooch/Tampon Holder Set*.
2. All quotes are from a transcript of a conversation between Stutman and the author, February 2012.
3. In American author Art Spiegelman's graphic novel, *Maus*, serialized in *Raw*, 1980-1991, he recounts his father's experiences as a Polish Jew and Holocaust survivor, using mice, cats, and pigs to represent Jews, Germans, and Poles.

Musical Metal
Contemporary Ornate Instruments

BY KIRSI HASTINGS

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS, AS we know them today, have evolved through time and tradition, from humblest beginnings into beautiful distillations of form and function. Contemporary artists and craftspeople who make and adorn instruments are contributing to the long tradition of musical culture. Their works inspire and cultivate improvements that serve the needs of musicians who demand responsive, well-crafted instruments.

Historically, there have been three distinct musical categories: percussion, strings, and wind. With the relatively recent inclusion of digital techniques, there are now, arguably, four. This article will focus specifically on artists working within the third category: wind instruments, or "horns." Primitive horns were fabricated to transmit signals over distance. They were made from a variety of available materials including wood, clay, shell, bone, or animal horn (hence the name). Evidence of an inherent human, aural curiosity, horns can be found almost everywhere in the world people gathered and established communities.[1]

Horns, and later wind instruments like the saxophone or tuba, produce sound when a vibrating column of air is blown into the instrument. The sound wave is amplified through an expanding cavity before being propelled out of the large end, while a horn's sound frequency is determined by its shape and length. The internal bore determines both tonal quality and pitch, and apertures along the tube, called tone holes, effectively shorten the horn when they are uncovered.

The wind instruments that have become familiar to us are the product of many small technological advances. The earliest known metal horns were discovered in ancient Egypt and date to about 1415 BC. Two examples, one silver and one bronze, were excavated from the tomb of Tutankhamun and were found to have a very limited tonal range of only one or two notes.[2] Such signal horns were employed for ceremonial purposes, on battlefields, and in the gladiatorial arena. These unearthed Egyptian horns are similar in size and length to the plastic vuvuzela popularized at the 2010 World Cup in South Africa and would likely have sounded much the same.

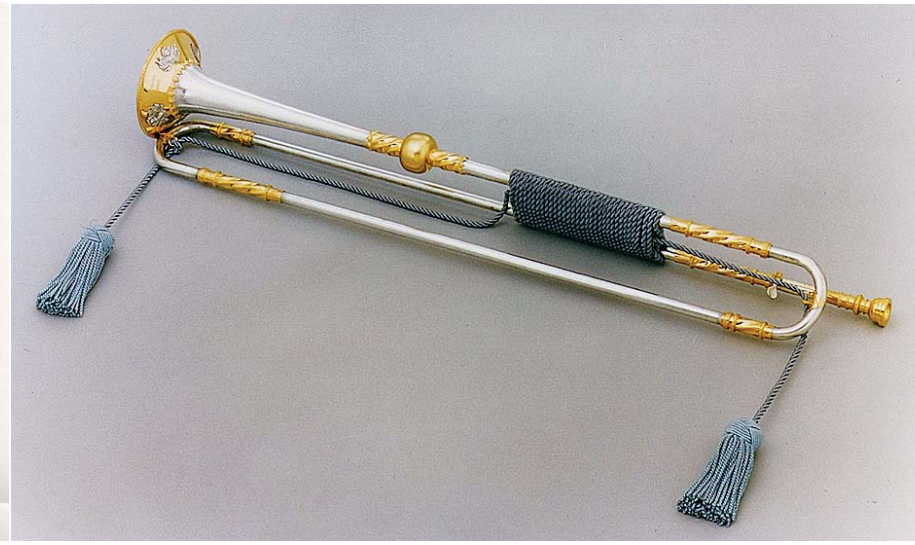
The invention of alloyed brass revolutionized vessel-making and, in particular, the fabrication of instruments. Brass has become the metal of choice in contemporary horns since it was first crudely smelted in the Middle Ages.[3] During the 16th century, the metallurgy process was refined and instrument makers were able to build horns that resonated better than the earlier cast-bronze or flimsier solid-silver versions. They experimented with bell shapes and developed the "bow" by filling lengths of tubing with molten lead before bending. The addition of a bow allowed for much longer horns to be "wrapped" into compact horns, thereby increasing the number of harmonic notes each musician could carry on a single instrument.

By the time of the Renaissance in Europe, horn players

EWALD AND BERNHARD MEINL
Renaissance Tenor Sackbut, 2011
brass, gold, silver

SHERRY HUNTLEY
King Silversonic Bell Trombone (detail), 2012
sterling silver, 14k gold plating

CHRISTOPHER MONK INSTRUMENTS
Reproduction Military Marching Serpent, 2005
maple wood, leather, brass, paint
WOODWORK BY KEITH ROGERS;
BRASS AND LEATHERWORK BY NICHOLAS PERRY



EGGAR INSTRUMENTS
Hand Built Long Trumpet, 2011
brass, silver with gold plate

belonged to two classes: those who played in the towers or at battle and those who had honed their skill and found favor in the courts. The latter performed music and accompanied choral musicians to wide acclaim and respect, thereby fueling the demand for well-crafted horns.

With the integration of horns into the musical culture of the West, horn makers were expected to build instruments that played in tune, and were durable enough to be used in the field for hunting or battle. Metalsmiths opened specialized instrument shops in European cities where there was the greatest demand for their products. Wealthy patrons sought quality musicians and instruments to represent their courtly status, and their commissions spurred the development of the first ornate metal instruments in the western world.

Many of the advances in Western instrument making ran parallel to a flourishing period of holloware production and goldsmithing in the Bavarian city of Nuremberg during the 16th and 17th centuries.[4] Nuremberg lay along an important trade route between eastern and northern Europe, and was located near significant non-ferrous metal deposits. Several hundreds of highly skilled smiths of silver, gold, and brass flocked to the city where they were governed by a strictly enforced guild system designed to insure the mercantile success of the region.[5] Trade instrument builders were commissioned to embellish their horns with precious metals using chasing, repoussé, and other techniques popularized by fine silversmiths, with whom they shared space and material sources.

Much like the guild center of Nuremberg in early-modern Europe, the northeastern and midwestern regions of he United States became home to several industrialized instrument manufacturing companies such as Conn, Bundy, Selmer, Buesher, LeBlanc, Getzen, and Graves & Co., from the turn of the 19th century onward. A culture of nationalism crystallized here between the world wars, increasing market demand for American-made instruments as well as sheet music. Marching bands and community-based ensembles of amateur and professional musicians became fixtures of American life, dating from the swing era when the music of big bands and military bands held sway. By the time recorded music overtook live music performance in the mid-20th century, the business of building musical instruments had changed drastically. Industrial production, which grew concurrently with demand for instruments, also resulted in many efforts to improve upon earlier versions of wind instruments.

As the market for new instruments began its gradual decline, some of the hundreds of American workers with specialized instrument manufacturing skills struck out on their own, giving birth to a secondary market of custom instruments. Despite the dominance of corporate manufacturers, handcrafted instruments have maintained popularity among musicians seeking custom features, shapes, and details. The competition between large- and small-scale manufacturers continues to drive innovation, benefiting musicians of all levels.[6]

In recent decades there has been a significant revival of interest in early music from the Renaissance onwards. This is partly due to the ease of access by historians, musicians, and educators to materials from libraries around the world. Versions of music by the likes of Bach, Handel, and Mozart, much edited over the years, have been studiously rendered back to their earliest known forms. Efforts to return to original compositions are not, however, an attempt to be correct for the sake of orthodoxy but rather to be faithful to the art in its original form.[7] The byproduct of this growing movement is a renewed interest in instruments of the Renaissance and Baroque periods. Skilled craftspeople such as Christopher Monk have been encouraged to revisit the design and production methods of early instruments like the "Serpent," a military (marching) horn dating back to the 16th century. A precursor

to valve tubas, these rare instruments are carved from wood but incorporate a brass style mouthpiece and metal vent keys or venting holes. Many of the world's finest orchestras now strive to include period horns such as these out of a respect for original compositions where they are indicated in the score.

For players, shifting to instruments built in the early days of a balanced scale is a serious challenge after studying on modern instruments. Likewise, the diligent makers of reproduction early horns, such as Egger, Christopher Monk, and Meinl Instruments, have undertaken the challenge to re-learn the rudimentary methods of building instruments by hand from raw materials, a practice long put to rest by industrial tools and methods. In their investigation of early instrument making, Meinl has built historical reproductions of brass instruments in a small factory in Geretsried, Germany, less than three hours north of Nuremberg. The tenor sackbut shown here is based on a 16th-century original created by Erasmus Schnitzer; it is the oldest known existing trombone and now resides in Nuremberg's Germanischen Nationalmuseum.

At the beginning of the early-music revival in the postwar period, there was substantial discourse among musicians and scholars about the quality of reproduction instruments.[8] The preference for less standardized older models has led some makers to abandon contemporary methods—like machine spinning bells in favor of hand forging and smithing the shapes on custom mandrels. The trend toward hand fabrication has also encouraged makers to revisit the detailed, decorative elements associated with the instruments of the day.

Elements that appear to be strictly decorative on early instruments may actually represent efforts to refine an imperfect manufacturing process. Wreaths of nickel or brass were applied around hand-hammered brass bells to enclose the otherwise thinned and ragged metal edges of hammer-formed bells. Straight trumpets often feature spherical balls, which were added to the exterior tubing primarily as a handle for the player, but also in some cases to cover butt-jointed sections of tubing. Hunting horns (the precursor to the common French horn) featured large bells with difficult-to-polish interior surfaces, and so early makers chose instead to cover them with painted designs. The early long trumpet is known for the silk cord traditionally wound over the tubing, the purpose of which was initially to cover wooden blocks used to stabilize loosely looped tube sections. These band-aid solutions to problems became integral to the overall instrument design aesthetic of early music.

Contemporary Swiss makers at Eggar Instruments hand-build many reproduction horns and recreate the decorative elements of the Baroque and Renaissance models without opting to solve the "problems" of early production methods. The *"Gorgeous Model" Baroque Long Trumpet* is fashioned after an instrument made in 1657 by instrument builder Michael Nagel from Nuremberg. The bulb and ornaments are ornate replicas of Nagel's "Vasa" instruments, featuring cast angel heads, gold-plated wreath, gold ferrule details, and silk cord covering.

Unlike slender early trumpets, the contemporary trumpet is known for its compact wrap and piston-style valves. Piston valves were first patented in 1818 in Prussia and were popularized in the Jazz Age in America among such iconic

DAVID G. MONETTE
Charles Schlueter's Decorated Presetation Samadhi C Trumpet, 2010
24k gold plate, turquoise, diamond, amethyst, black opal, ruby, tiger eye, malachite, sugilite
DECORATIVE PIERCING BY TAMI DEAN; CARVED FINGER RINGS MARC MCNOUN

JOHN LUNN
Dryad's Touch Flute (with detail), 2009
18k gold, steel mechanism
PHOTO: JEFFREY NINTZEL

players as Louis Armstrong and Bix Beiderbecke and, much later, by Miles Davis. Although piston trumpets are played in most styles of music, trumpets with earlier rotary-style valves are still favored by many European musicians. These variables were once cause for serious argument among musicians and conductors but now represent two accepted iterations of style and function.

Among the various trumpets in current production, models by American maker David Monette stand out. His line of "Prana" trumpets are coveted by the premier trumpet players around the world. In addition to his small-scale-production horns, Monette also designs and fabricates "decorated" models, with collaborator, goldsmith and artist Tami Dean, resulting in some of the most intricate and ornate brass instruments built thus far. These commissioned horns feature custom cut and inlaid semi-precious stones and imagery intended to illustrate the life story of the player. In addition to the typical trumpet body, Monette sheaths the custom series with a secondary bell layer pierced with original cut-out designs.

Monette's *Elysian Decorated Presentation Trumpet* is his most arresting work to date. The piercing on this gold-plated instrument's outer bell and bracing illustrates the diverse and rich musical culture of the city of New Orleans. It bears many stone settings in the valve caps and finger buttons, as well as a turquoise inlay detail representative of the Mississippi River. The *Elysian Trumpet* has been declared a National Cultural Treasure by the Government of the United States. It was designed as a tribute to New Orleans based musician Irvin Mayfield Sr., and has also become a memorial symbol for the many victims of Hurricane Katrina from that very musical city.

Edge-blown flutes, recorders, and saxophones developed in parallel to other horns, but rather than adding tubing length, the instruments are made progressively shorter by the opening of tone holes under the pads of a player's fingers. In the early 1800s musician Theobald Boehm added mechanical keys and felt pads to even out the spacing between notes, an innovation that resulted in a modern flute that fits the tempered scale. Although it is made of the same golds and silvers employed by many jewelers, the flute's small size prohibits much modification because even minor additions impact its frequency in a dramatic way. One maker, John Lunn, resolves these issues by hand-fabricating his instruments in their entirety. His flutes incorporate handmade reliefs of allegory and mythology directly into the mechanism, as in *Dryad's Touch*, which illustrates a story about forest nymphs drawn from Greek mythology. Lunn has honed his chasing and hammer-forming skills, using sterling silver and gold to build very ornate custom flutes, sometimes incorporating direct castings of twigs into the posts and keys.

Harry van Ekert and Cilia van Uffelen have approached the custom flute market in an entirely new way. After cutting their teeth as goldsmiths in Europe and working with custom flute makers in the United States, they returned to the Netherlands to open Eloy Flutes in 2006. The bodies of their flutes are constructed in silver and gold with a type of *mokume gane* developed specifically for this purpose called Mokumeum©. The folded metal is rolled into sheets and then formed into tubing before professional style tone holes, pinless key mechanisms, and lip plates are added to complete the flute. The intricate metal marbling provides unexpected details that make each Eloy flute unique.

The same Boehm design of key alignment in flutes was also the basis for the development of the saxophone. A late edition to the horn family, it was patented in 1846 by Belgian inventor and musician Adolphe Sax. The saxophone was integral to the development of jazz. Concurrent with a time of ornate decoration in arts and architecture in North America, saxophones of all sizes were embellished with hand-cut engraving in Art Nouveau and Art Deco styles. The patterns

ELOYFLUTES
Mokumeum Flute
silver, 14k red gold, white gold

used were either standardized by model or were custom designed by only the most skilled master engravers at each factory. Today, several companies opt for laser engraving rather than hand-cut details, and even more are omitting the design element entirely.

In North America, Sherry Huntley, an engraver from Indiana, and Jason DuMars in Portland, Oregon, are among the few who continue this hand-engraving tradition. Huntley began by working as a factory engraver and trained under master engravers from two separate manufacturers in the Midwest. Discerning dealers, players, and collectors regularly commission her to restore and reproduce traditional designs on new and vintage instruments from her carefully compiled pattern books. The *King Silversonic Bell* was hand engraved and gold plated to match a museum original as a commission for Michael Randle, leader of the Miami Heat Street Band in Florida. The elaborate floral, snake, and artist's palette motifs were redesigned to fit alongside the original Silversonic logo already present on the instrument.

Jason DuMars, a saxophone player himself, is an interesting example of how the tradition may move forward. He is primarily self-taught and has channeled his passion for traditional patterns as well as architectural design into his craft. DuMars works in a lyrical manner, engraving his way around the instrument integrating custom imagery with his own stylized vocabulary of floral and geometric patterns. The engraving on DuMars's *Saprano "The Muse"* exemplifies the dynamic results of his additive method. Despite their different methods and markets, DuMars and Huntley each strives to keep the fine art of instrument engraving alive in North America. Passed down from one person to another over the decades, the skill of hand engraving is now becoming critically rare.[9]

JASON DUMARS
"The Muse," 1924 Conn Saprano Saxophone, 2012 (detail)
silver plated brass
PHOTO: ANDREW KREPS

In our digital age there is virtually unlimited access to music from all cultures and times. The response by contemporary musicians is to equip themselves with an arsenal of instruments that showcase their abilities. Like a paint box with an infinite number of colors and shades, an all-inclusive lexicon of dynamic sounds and instruments is now readily available to contemporary composers. The very language of music, once constrained by instrument design, may now instead be expanding due to the growth and variety of custom instruments available. The artists and makers of today's ornate horns are subject to the whims of their patrons. What differentiates their work from that of their predecessors is that now the patrons who dictate style and details are the players themselves.[10] Many of the makers included here have keyed into the desires of a new generation of musicians. The designs they employ use allegory and imagery that represent their customers' personal style and aspirations. More than ever, instrument makers must tune both the look and function of their horns to suit the true instrument: the player. One of the best ways to achieve this is by creating instruments that are also works of art.

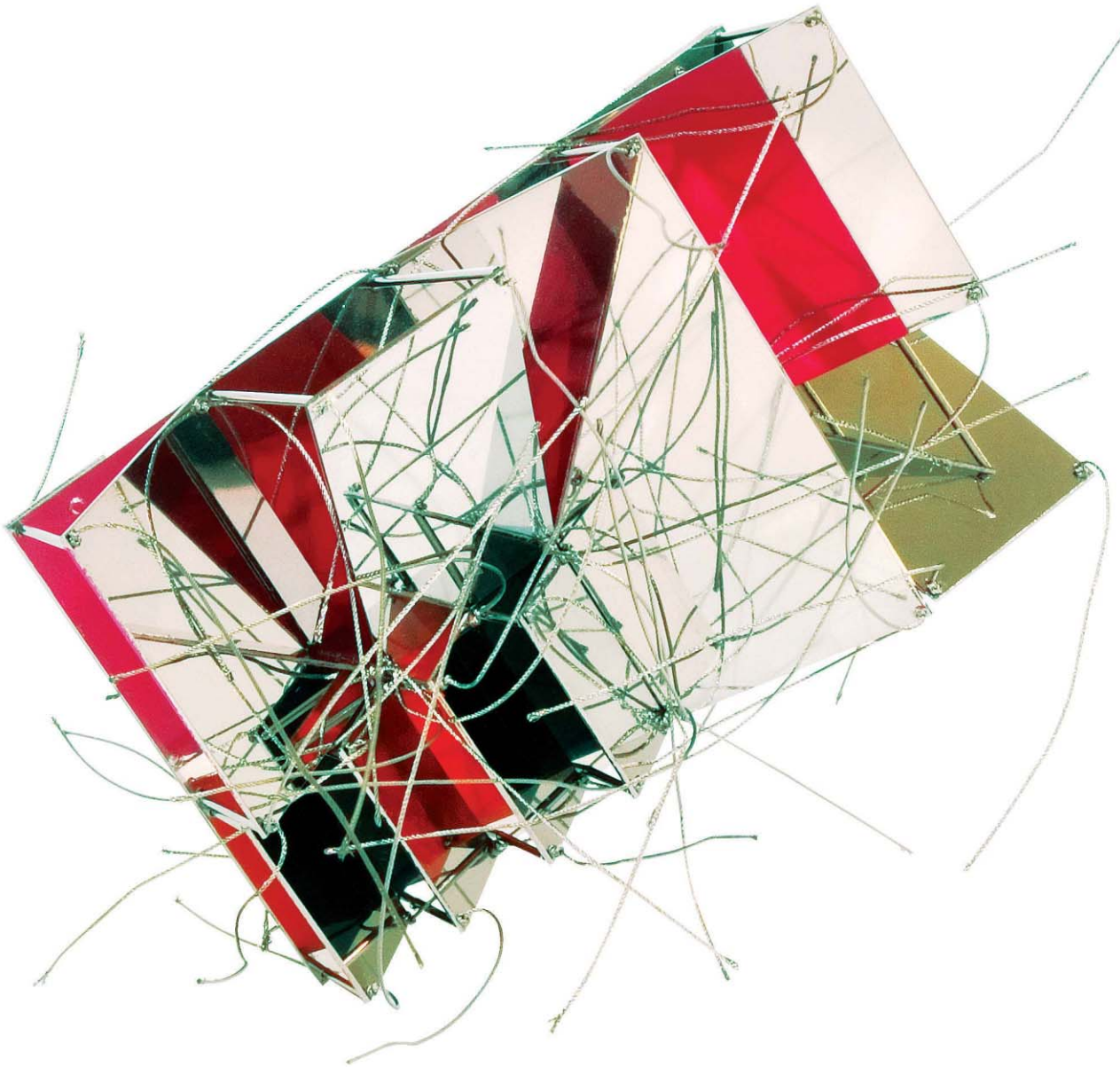
Kirsi Hastings, a professional band instrument repair technician in Toronto, Canada, studied jewelry and metalsmithing at Ontario College of Art, and Band Instrument Repair Technology at Renton, Washington.

1. Anthony Baines, *Brass Instruments Their History and Development.* (London: Faber & Faber Ltd., 1976), pp 53-5.
2. For more on the trumpets of Tutenkhamen's tomb, see Christine Finn, "Recreating the Sound of Tutankhamun's Trumpets," *Ghost Music*, BBC Radio 4, originally aired April 19, 2011.
3. During the Medieval era brass was smelted from copper with the base ore of zinc known then as "calamine." As the process of alloying zinc and copper advanced, the resulting metal contained fewer impurities and brass could be formed into much thinner and sturdier sheets. Robert Barclay, "Design Technology and Manufacture before 1800" in Trevor Herbert and John Wallace *Cambridge Companion to Brass Instruments* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp 24-6.
4. Hermann Schadt, *Goldsmiths Art: 5000 years of Jewellery and Holloware* (Stuttgart: Arnoldsche Art Publisher, 1996), p 110.
5. Don L. Smithers, *The Music and History of the Baroque Trumpet before 1721* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1989), p 69.
6. Larger corporations commonly purchase the name and/or patents of successful custom instrument builders and incorporate their innovations and prestige into the company's product line.
7. Curt Sachs, *The History of Musical Instruments* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1968), p 449.
8. Robert Barclay, *The Art of the Trumpet-Maker: The Materials, Tools and Techniques of Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries in Nuremberg* (Toronto: Clarendon Press-Oxford, 1992), pp 58-9.
9. Sherry Huntley laments the disappearance of a once common skill, and is teaching techniques to her daughter in an effort to pass forward her specialized knowledge.
10. Edward Tarr, *The Trumpet,* (London: B.T. Batsford Ltd, 1988), p 26.

Peter Skubic: On the Edge

BY LIESBETH DEN BESTEN

Blind Persons Cannot Read, 2007
stainless steel, laquer
3 ½ x 1 ½ x 2"



Brooch, 2007
stainless steel, lacquer
3 ⅛ x 2 x 1 ⅜"

"PEOPLE MOSTLY DON'T LOOK—most people don't see anything." For Peter Skubic, a seminal figure in the postwar European jewelry field, it is this general lack of perception that provides him with a raison d'etre for making art—whether it be jewelry, sculpture, video or performance. The Austria-based artist is a contrarian, whose radical views are often at odds with those of the contemporary art jewelry community. He believes, for example, that jewelry need not be worn to be fully understood; it can be appreciated in other ways, such as on display in domestic space. He is also firmly committed to the idea that jewelry should become part of museum collections, where it can "disseminate information." In 1993 Skubic, true to his word, donated his private jewelry collection to the International Design Museum, Munich (Die Neue Sammlung / Pinakothek der Moderne), on the condition that the institution make a serious commitment to contemporary art jewelry as an integral part of its holdings. His gift spurred more donations (from Galerie Spektrum, Sepp Schmölzer, etc.), culminating in the long-term loan of the Danner collection and the creation of permanent jewelry galleries (the Danner Rotunde), in the new premises of the Pinakothek der Moderne.

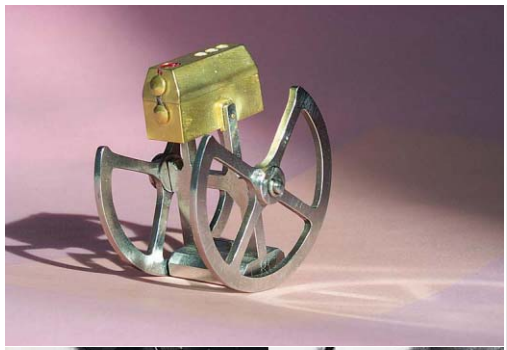
At 77, Skubic personifies the bon vivant, laughing out loud as he declares, "I will go on for another 23 years—a man needs a target!" After all, when he was 50 he mounted the exhibition *Halbzeit*, which means "halftime." Skubic began the study of jewelry in 1952, enrolling in the School of Metal Arts and Crafts in Steyr, Germany, where he learned engraving and steel cutting. He subsequently attended the Academy of Applied Arts in Vienna, studying under Eugen Mayer and graduating in 1958.

Skubic has always been interested in jewelry as a conceptual art, questioning where it begins and where it ends.

Ten silent years followed, after which Skubic came forward with his first distinct collection: a series of solid-gold masculine rings that displayed his interest in eroticism. Although he had studied metal crafts and art, Skubic's approach to jewelry was not typical of a trained goldsmith. "I developed from a technical crafts training," he recalls, "and I learned certain 'truths' about jewelry, such as, 'a ring should be round on the inside,' which is not true at all." In the 1970s, he produced a series of rings (including *Between Finger Pieces*, a collection of square rings, and some with interior serrations) all challenging conventional ideas about wearability.

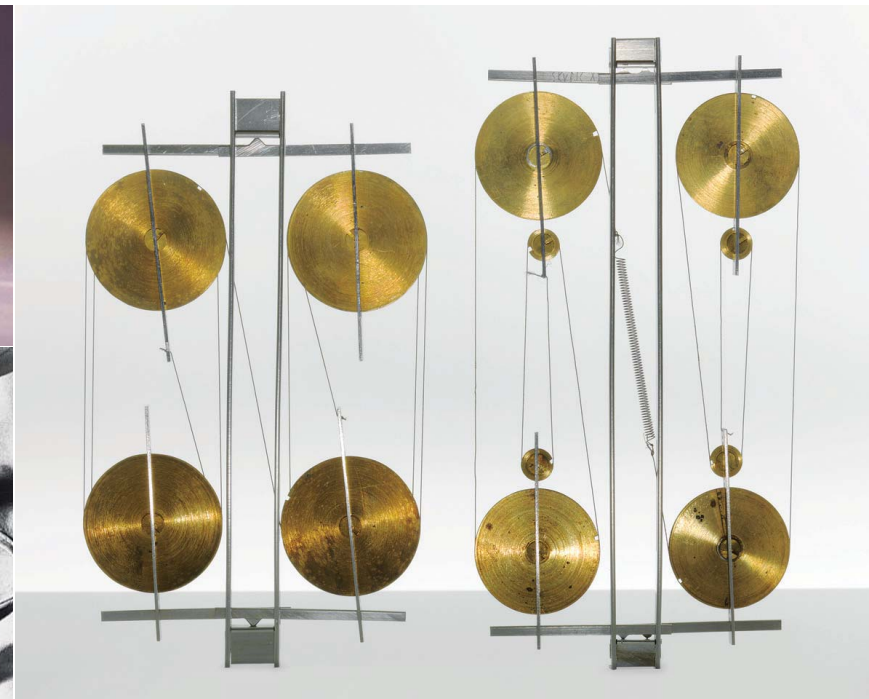
Skubic has always been interested in jewelry as a conceptual art, questioning where it begins and where it ends: "A sun tan, holes in the ear, body decorations and scarification?" He suggests such forms of bodily alteration as a kind of jewelry that exists, if only as an idea. He then takes this concept to the extreme with his interest in invisible jewelry, examples of which have included the pouring and melting of a quicksilver ring, documented in a video (2001); painted square stands for invisible rings (1993); a series of 14 graphics called *The Inside of a Ring* (1985); and the photo of a smiling woman, standing in front of Christo's "Wrapped Reichstag" in Berlin, wearing a white T-shirt with the words "Hier fehlt Schmuck designed by Peter Skubic" (1989). Ironically the "missing" jewelry is prominently on view within many of these works in the form of text.

Finger Jewelry, 1970-76
PHOTO: EVA JÜNGER



Ring (casket for the steel implant "Jewellery Under the Skin"), 1982
stainless steel, gold

Photo documentation of jewelry being implanted under skin, 1982



Jewelry-object "Idol VI", 1986
stainless steel, brass
height 7"
Jewelry-object "Idol III", 1985
stainless steel, brass
height 7 ¾"
PHOTO: EVA JÜNGER

However, Skubic's most notorious exercise in invisibility, *Jewellery Under the Skin* (1975–1982), involved the implantation of a small steel plate in his left underarm on November 4, 1975. The surgery was documented in photos, while the extraction, in 1982, was recorded on video. Afterwards, to insure its invisibility forever, the steel implant was locked away in a small gold coffin on top of a stainless steel ring.

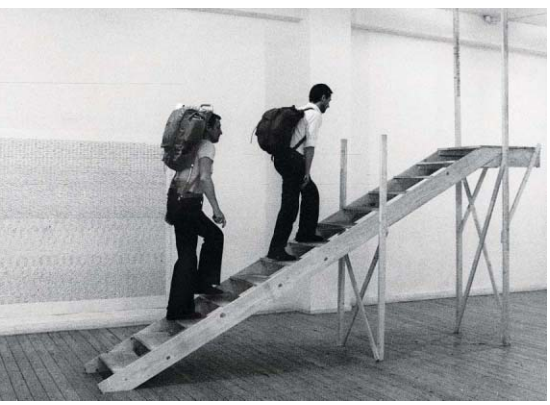
Skubic operates as a serious artist strongly committed to jewelry as his primary medium. From the start, he has been fully engaged in the jewelry discourse, initiating events and curating exhibitions. As a professor at the Academy in Cologne (Fachhochschule für Kunst), from 1979 to 2000, he taught not technique "but theory, and the history of art and jewelry," believing that "students should know about the classics." Cologne was very important for his personal artistic development. "There were so many galleries, I learned a lot," he says. "Cologne, Düsseldorf, Bonn—that was where it happened in those days, it was a very exciting time. I love to cook and together with artist Daniel Spoerri, who was also a teacher in Cologne, we cooked for our students."

In 1974 Skubic organized the *Schmuck aus Stahl* (Jewelry of Steel) symposium, on the social and political consequences of using diamonds and gold. "Steel, the material from my early days, appeared to be a welcome alternative," he recalls. He invited a group of 17 international jewelry artists to work with steel, among them Gijs Bakker, Anton Cepka, Otto Künzli, Emmy van Leersum, Fritz Maierhofer, and Manfred Nisslmuller. The symposium was organized in collaboration with four steel factories in the small city of Kapfenberg and other places in Austria, where employees of the companies executed the artists' designs. In Kapfenberg, Skubic succeeded in transforming an ugly room, put at his disposal, into an engaging gallery space: He installed the steel objects on a huge grass-covered mound in the center of the room, demonstrating both his disdain for conventional display cases and his belief in creating non-traditional contexts for jewelry.

In 1980 Skubic organized *Schmuck International 1900–1980* at the Künstlerhaus in Vienna, involving 159 artists from 14 countries and including historical pieces from museums in Prague and Pforzheim. Again, he sought to make a point: "In this period the art jewelry scene in Europe had just exploded," he says, "and I wanted to show the public what jewelry was about, what its meaning was."

Skubic perceives jewelry as a viable art form that extends far beyond the decorative. In discussing his views on jewelry, Skubic asserts that he does not place conceptual work, or

Balance-Object, Vorchdorf, 1987
mixed materials



Climbing Mount Everest, 1986

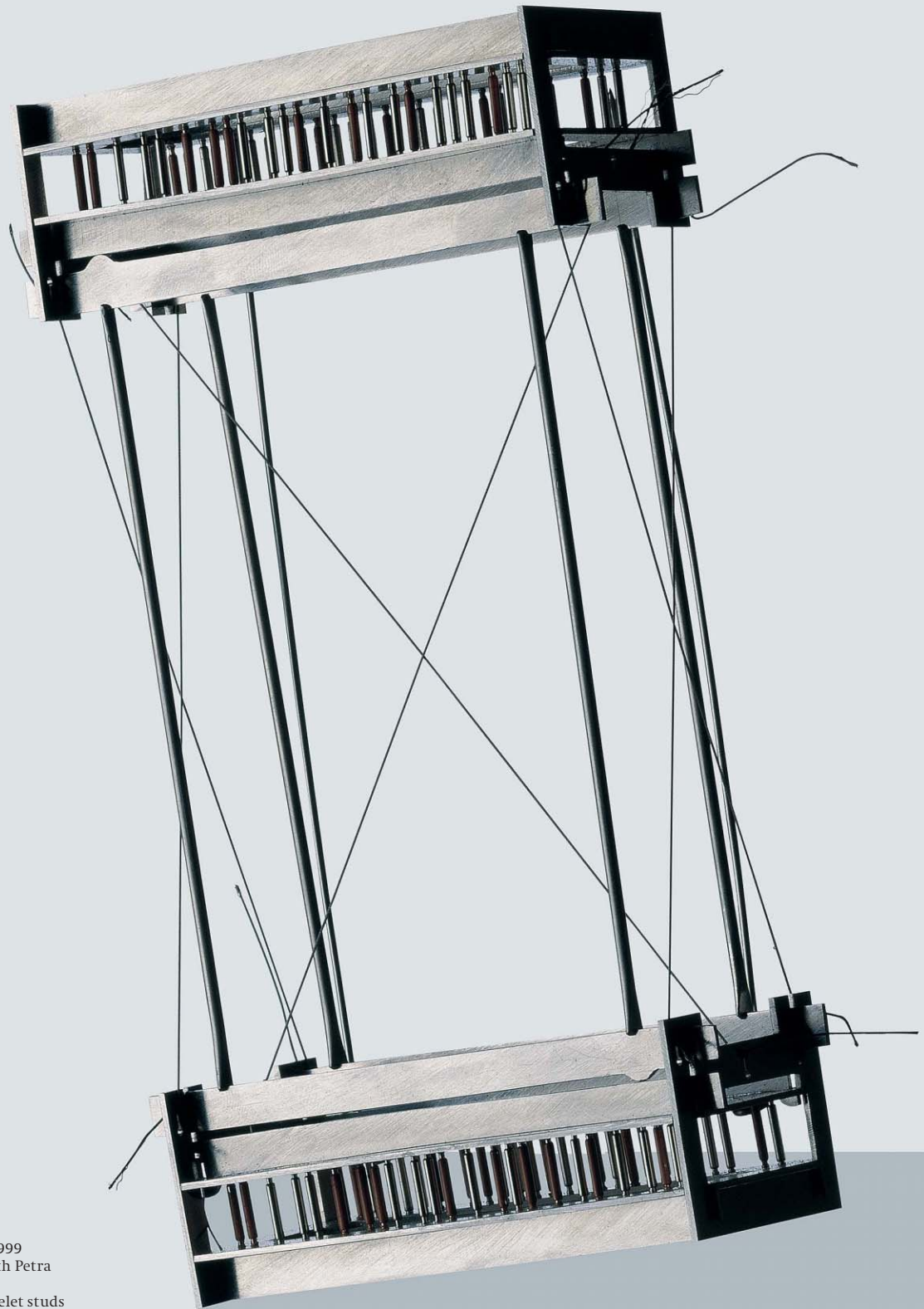
even sculpture, above the jewelry itself. "Jewelry is a wonderful domain," Skubic says. Sometimes his ideas lead him in another direction, however. "I follow a route where I find beautiful things. An idea for something small sometimes interests me to make it bigger. Ideas may rest for a long time in my head. After some time I even know how to make it." When Skubic speaks of "beautiful things" he is not referring to aesthetics, but to the act of confronting and questioning an aspect of something.

His extreme art action, *Climbing Mount Everest* (1986), is a case in point. Performed during four days and nights in Cologne, Skubic, together with a befriended mountain climber, climbed up and down a two-meter high ladder, in full kit, including bivouac, until the 8,848-meter "ascent" was completed. The climbing performance can be seen as another way of violating the body—as he did before with *Jewelry under the Skin* (1975–82)—by exhausting it.

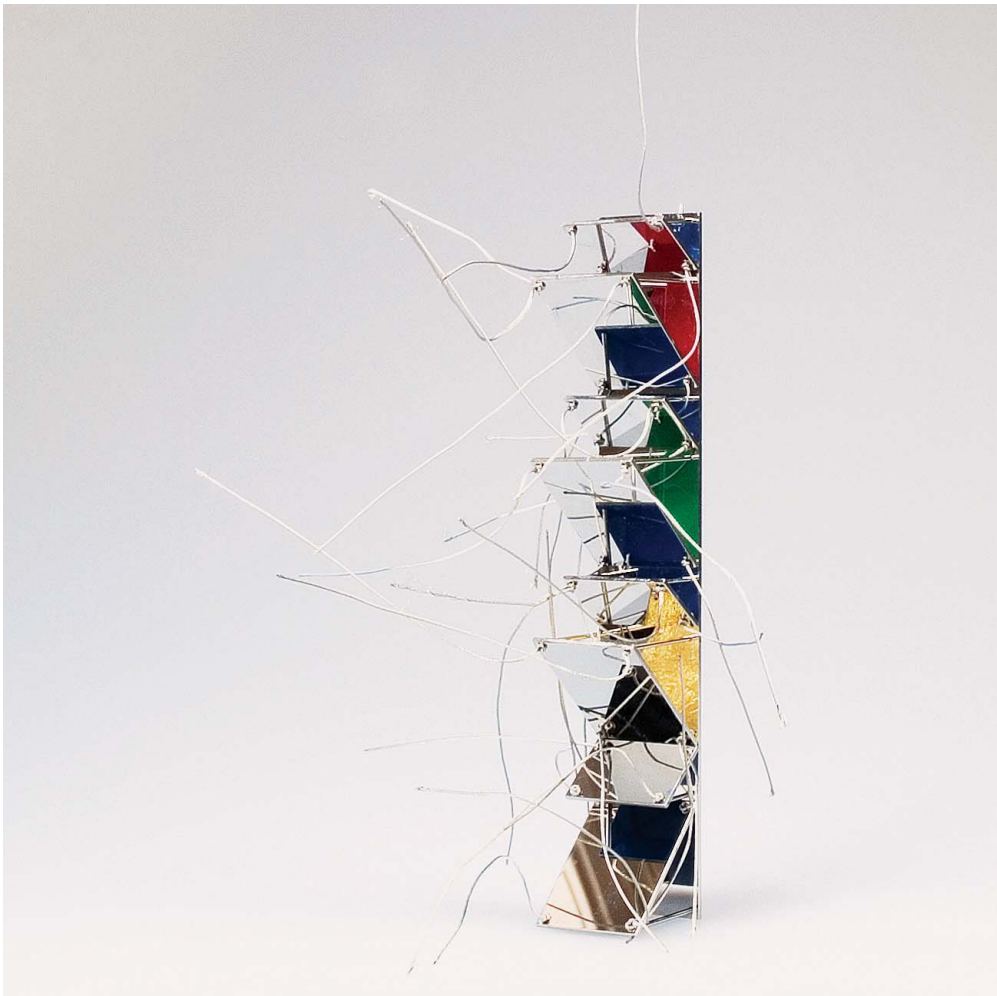
In his jewelry of the early 1970s, Skubic explored the ambiguous space between the rational and the surreal, using industrial elements to evoke anthropomorphic forms with a sexually aggressive narrative—bullet-like phallus shapes, for example, or female genitalia represented by a ruby set in a linear silver construction. His *Finger Rings* depicted a bent finger with lacquered nail, which rests menacingly on the wearer's own hand. But as Skubic exchanged gold for steel, the biomorphism gave way to sharp-edged geometric constructions held together with joints, springs, bracelet studs, screws, steel wire and other devices. Towards the end of the 1970s, this new approach was fully established. The complex technical expression of his brooches, with an emphasis on tension and stabilization of form, is the result of a form-follows-process aesthetic that has endured throughout Skubic's long career. He explains it as stemming from a lack of education: "Because I didn't learn how to do things properly, I had to learn how to think like an engineer."

This "tension jewelry," as Skubic calls it, is obviously informed by architectural structures and industry, confronting the body in a harsh manner, as if with instruments of torture. Any reference to decoration is irrelevant: they shine like the blade of a knife and the details are purely industrial in nature. This radical jewelry is provokingly awkward, not instantly inviting to pin on one's clothing.

Skubic's sketches on graph paper, from rather rough impressions to more detailed renderings, show proportion, precision, and perfection at the core of his work. And yet, inspired by ancient Cycladic idols, Skubic introduced a new human element in the mid-1980s. With the *Idols*, a series of large-scale sculptures, outlines become softened, even



Millennium Brooch, 1999
(in co-operation with Petra Zimmermann)
stainless steel, bracelet studs
6 ¾ x 3 ¾ x 1 ½"



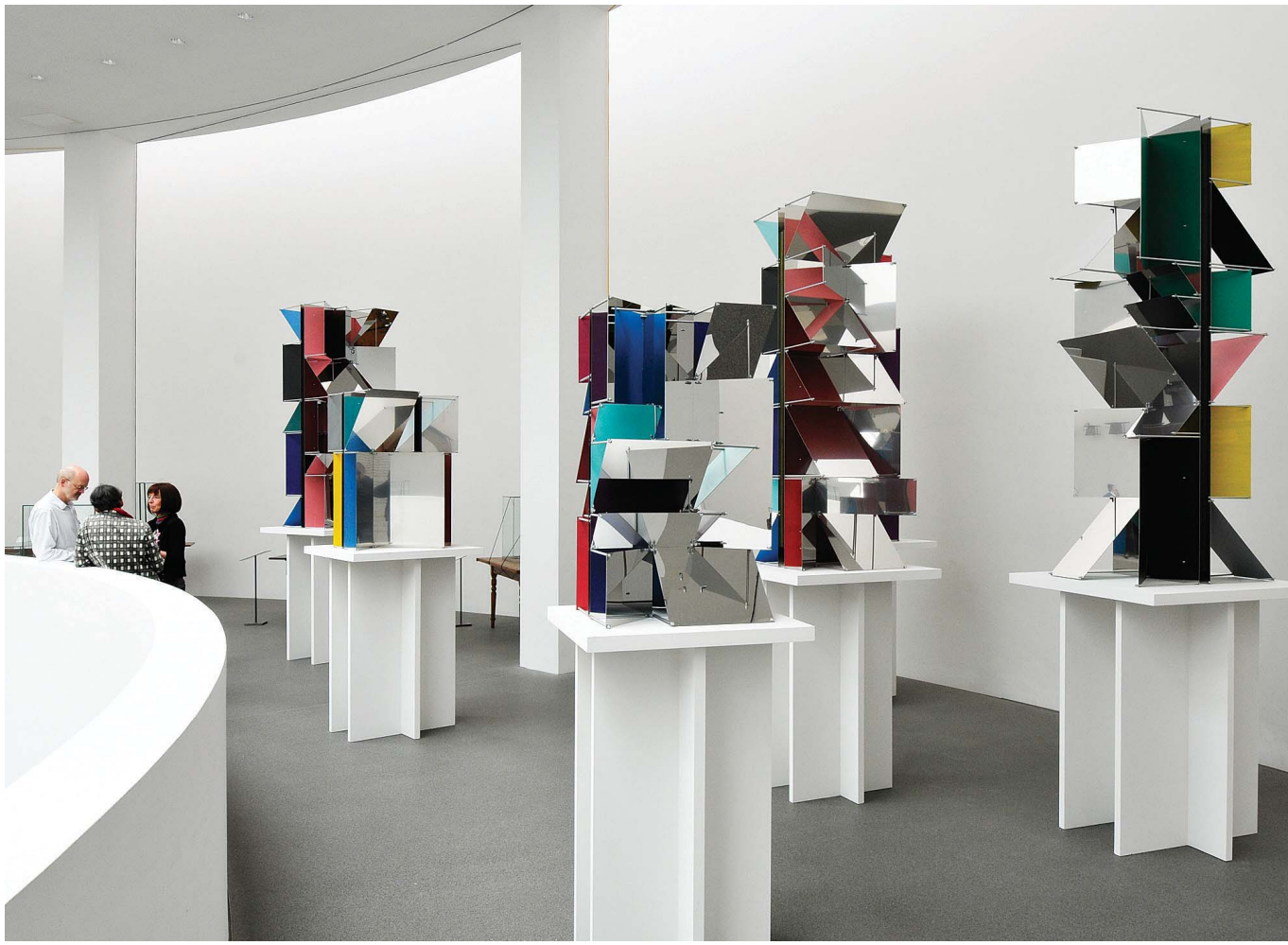
Brooch, 2012
stainless steel, lacquer, gold leaf
4 ¾ x 1"

This was a fruitful period for Skubic, a time when he also started investigating the properties of mirrors, ultimately leading to the mirror brooches and wall sculptures he continues to pursue today.

rounded, with large pairs of metal discs composing the tension structure. An ignorant viewer might take these intriguing forms as clock works, but the title prompts associations with breasts, buttocks and hips, those parts of the female body that in many cultures signal the centers of fertility. The *Idols* are Skubic's homage to women, and it is interesting to see how these imposing sculptures (up to 13 feet high), accord with the surrounding nature and architecture of their site.

As a counterpart to his complex tension jewelry, Skubic started making "Balance Sculptures" in 1987. These pieces represent a new, spontaneous way of working in which found objects, such as nails, plastic doll parts, tools, stones, and feathers, are joined with wire, set with a counter balance, and placed on furniture, chairs, tables, and shelves. This was a fruitful period for Skubic, a time when he also started investigating the properties of mirrors, ultimately leading to the mirror brooches and wall sculptures he continues to pursue today. Skubic prefers steel mirrors, because "they reflect directly on the surface. In glass mirrors," he explains, "the glass first absorbs the light before it reaches the reflecting surface underneath and then it is again reflected through the glass. I was very happy to discover this prefab steel mirror material to work with."

His first mirror works were conceptual, emphasizing the material and its effect on the viewer by adding text to the surface. Later, he started making more complicated compositions consisting of little steel mirror plates that meet at a 30 degree angle with color or gold leaf applied to some of the parts. Skubic explains that there are two types of mirror brooches: "One group is based on graphic drawings—studies in color, shape, angles and harmony; the other group is based on names of particular people. The codes of the names correspond with the Fibonacci sequence and I use a color and a number as coordinates. I play with it. These brooches are made for someone; they are an homage to a special person." Every detail of each brooch is fixed with steel string wound from 49 different twines, and tied with little knots. Although the reason for these strings is functional—to keep things together



Mirror Objects in exhibition "Radical.Peter Skubic.Jewelry,"
Die Neue Sammlung - The International Design Museum Munich, 2011
stainless steel, aluminium, lacquer
PHOTO: BERNHARD LIMBERGER

and to protect the mirrors from being touched—they also are a rather prominent design element in each brooch. In fact, they disturb the austerity of each composition, as Skubic explains: "They are like three-dimensional graphics in contrast to the constructions. But I only noticed this afterwards."

Different writers on Skubic's mirror works have alluded to the use of the mirror in the history of art—from Velásquez's *Las Meninas* to Michelangelo Pistoletto, Robert Morris, and Dan Graham—as a means to address the idea of perception. Skubic's approach to the mirror is to make us understand that we do not see the mirror itself, but the reflection in the mirror. In this way, the mirror is mysterious, phantasmal and elusive. In his larger mirror wall sculptures, which are for technical reasons constructed without steel strings, the effect is even stronger, because reflection now completely takes over. The observer cannot be sure about what he is actually seeing, and what you see changes with every move.

Peter Skubic's most recent special exhibition, "Radical. Peter Skubic. Jewelry" in the Neue Sammlung in Munich (2011), made clear that he is a prolific artist with a wide-ranging oeuvre. The works and themes touched on here—eroticism, invisibility, balance, steel, construction and perfection—are only part of the narrative. Skubic also created purely poetic and painterly works, like the vampire, butterfly, and fly brooches made from iron wire (1973), or a solar eclipse brooch in gold, silver, and niello (2000). In addition, there are chains, videos, and color-field drawings, and many more conceptual works than there is space to describe—all of which testify to Skubic's conviction that jewelry is a potent artistic medium and a fertile field of cultural research.

Liesbeth den Besten, an independent art historian based in the Netherlands, is author of the recently published On Jewellery, A Compendium of International Contemporary Art Jewellery.

Furthermore:
www.peterskubic.at

Reviews

Kara Hamilton–Gift: Provenance Unknown

Salon 94, New York City
December 8, 2011–January 21, 2012

by Rosanne Raab

Kara Hamilton's incisive "Gift: Provenance Unknown" presents 13 finely crafted, found-object sculptures that demonstrate her research into the elaborate Fabergé Easter eggs (specifically those that went missing), commissioned by Tsar Alexander III (1845–94) for his wife, Maria Fedorovna. The family tradition of collecting the Fabergé Easter eggs was continued by son Nicholas II until the Romanov Empire was terminated by the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917.

In contrast to such lavish gifts exchanged by Russian royalty in the 19th century, Hamilton's work explores present-day gift rituals through a new lens—envisioning the differences between economic and creative and cultural exchange. While the Fabergé eggs invariably contained an exquisite mechanical surprise, each of Hamilton's pieces reveals a highly ornamented miniature world devoid of functionality that presents itself as a ceremonial gift. Her materials include vintage tableware, discarded silver jewelry and elements of the natural world: shells, antlers, feathers, fool's gold (pyrite), and clusters of crystal. What may have once been gifts themselves rematerialize in a regifted form.

The inspiration for this show came from Hamilton's discovery of buckets of silver flatware, holloware, and assorted chains, rings, and brooches awaiting meltdown purely for their metal value in New York City's jewelry district. She developed relationships with dealers who gave her *carte blanche* to purchase from their hoard at wholesale prices.

No longer a symbol of status or an object valued for its memories of family history, precious metal was there for the picking. Hamilton built her silver treasury with these items. She also foraged for remnants of nature on the beaches of Long Island and on hiking trails in upstate New York. From these diverse sources she built her sculptures, favoring a baroque vocabulary of rich textures and heavily ornamented surfaces, some of which emanate from nature (weathered shells, bleached bones) others from engraved and chased silver originally hand worked by studio craftsmen and skilled tradesmen employed by the silver industry.

Moonstrance is a ritual vessel used to display the consecrated Eucharist. To form *Moonstrance* into a symbolic icon that might allude to such a vessel, the artist encircles a conch shell with twisted and dented flatware. *Ruby Eye,* composed of a seagull's skull and silver mesh set with a polished raw ruby, captures a mystical spirit. In each of these figures, Hamilton artfully incorporates stainless steel rivets that insure a stable and lasting life for each piece.

Hamilton encourages free-wheeling interpretations of her work; it is the "magic" that feeds art. Looking upon *Guinevere,* formed from shell and sterling, in close proximity to *Arthur,* one might ask, "Are they reminiscing about Camelot, or perhaps dreaming of a renewed passion?" *Pink Orient,* with its fan of pink coral and vintage silver, suggests a refuge for a family of ladybugs uprooted by a tsunami. A figure at prayer, *Our Lady,* is wrapped in silver beads with a silver cross perched on a bosom of shell. Might this be the artist in tranquil repose?

"Gift: Provenance: Unknown" is displayed as a theatrical installation. The sculptures appear like totemic figures positioned as if upon a stage with each "player" inhabiting a space and identity that together suggest a dialogue in progress. There is even a soundtrack, a gentle composition by Jacob Bill. The setting is essential to Hamilton, who defines her work as "process-based" and continues to seek an ongoing dialogue with the viewer.

Along with Hamilton's sculptures, Salon 94 showcases a select group of her jewelry designs, an art form that has served to support the artist's more cerebral endeavors. Hamilton skillfully solders silver remnants, discarded engagement rings, and identity chains (*I Want What I Want - Don't Think About It...I'm Married*) into stylish necklaces, rings, and crowns, the latter suited to a latter-day Romanov, perhaps, or more likely an actor parading down the red carpet at the Academy Awards.

Rosanne Raab is a New York-based independent curator and lecturer.

Moonstrance, 2011
sterling silver, shell
30 x 12 x 6"

Pink Orient, 2009
sterling silver, pink coral, ladybugs
19 x 7 x 5"

Masako Onodera: Tactile Bodies

William Busta Gallery,
Cleveland, Ohio
October 14–November 12, 2011

by Kathleen Browne

The William Busta Gallery expanded its space in November 2010, and with that came the ability to mount several solo exhibitions simultaneously. The wonderful new space allows for the display of larger works, while also providing smaller galleries more suited to intimate shows like Onodera's sculptural jewelry collection, *Tactile Bodies*.

Onodera has been engaged with this series for the past five years, and this exhibition surveys her project's steady evolution. The foundational materials she uses—needle-felted natural wool and found plastic parts—perfectly express the visceral interior forms of the body. The bulbous pink elements are held together by a soft matrix of "connective tissue" formed by the felted wool.

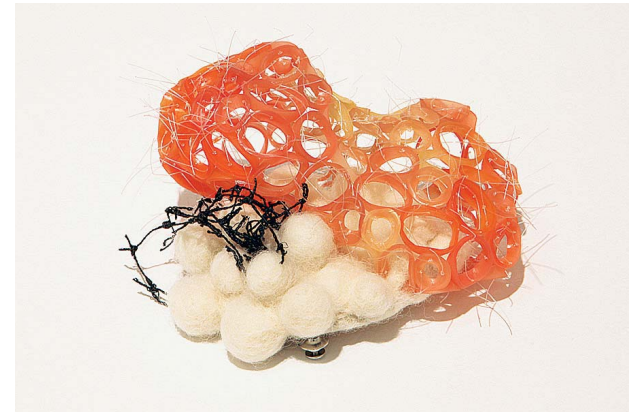
The word "eruption" occurs in the titles of two different works, suggesting perhaps a pathological presence or some uncontrollable growth. Although Onodera's work is meant to toggle between beauty and the grotesque, I find the materials and their handling much too appealing to reference decease; rather, her viscera appear to be as a picture of health—"in the pink," so to speak. I was surprised to learn that the pink translucent globes she uses were actually plastic grapes—a brilliant repurposing of found materials on Onodera's part.

The work *Appendage #2* (2008), is impossibly large and speaks to the body's burdens, excesses, and complications. Too long to actually be worn, one can only imagine its weight and drag. On the other hand, *Eruption Necklace* can easily be wrapped around and around the neck to create a comforting nest, or barrier, depending on your point of view.

In a group of three brooches titled *Germination 1, 2, 3* (2010), Onodera introduces baroque pearls into the mix of materials. The effect is a bit jarring, and the gems serve only to disrupt the anatomical fantasy created by the pink orbs and soft wool. In *Germination 2*, their placement seems arbitrary and a bit decorative. Onodera finds more resolution in *Germination 3* by placing the pearls in the crevices formed by the fleshy orbs, where they follow a logical growth pattern. My complaint here is that the inclusion of pearls make these pieces, self-consciously, pieces of jewelry.

Onodera's most recent pieces, all from 2011, mark a conceptual leap forward evidenced by new ways of handling her preferred materials in the creation of fresh, well-integrated forms. *Swell*, perhaps the strongest and most disturbing of these works, grotesquely represents the body not in a natural state but after surgical intervention. Here the pink orbs have been sliced into short tubes to reveal their fleshy interiors. Onodera obsessively sutures them together with monofilament, creating a web-like structure that sits on top of white cell forms. Knots of black linen reiterate the suturing effect but serve no functional purpose except to suggest a true Frankensteinian confection.

The final three works in the exhibition comprise a group titled *Burgeon (1, 2, 3)*, also from 2011. *Burgeon 1* is a somewhat, awkward transitional piece, but *Burgeon 2* continues to explore the new forms so deftly worked in *Swell*. It is in the piece, *Burgeon 3*, that Onodera makes another leap. Here she expands her color palette with the addition of bright green, yellow and turquoise elements, which serve to pull the work away from the realm of the body into an otherworldly direction.



Top: *Swell*, 2011
found objects, wool, brass, lacquered linen thread
4 x 4 ½ x 3"

Burgeon 3, 2011
found objects, wool, brass, nickel silver
5 x 3 ½ x 2 ½"

Tactile Bodies left this viewer excited about the future direction of Onodera's work and wondering, "What's next!

Kathleen Browne is a practicing metalsmith and head of the Jewelry/Metals/Enameling Department at Kent State University, Ohio.

Rebecca Strzelec: The Age of Bears and Other Self-Portraits

Juniata College Museum of Art, Huntingdon, PA
November 10, 2011–February 4, 2012

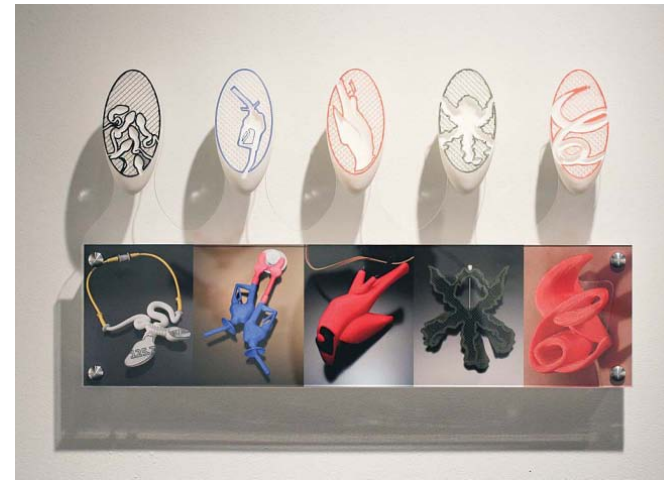
by Sharon Massey

An unlikely trio of technology, design, and wildlife science come together in "The Age of Bears and Other Self-Portraits," a solo exhibition by Rebecca Strzelec. The show features recent jewelry inspired by the artist's personal history and created using computer aided design and rapid prototyping processes.

While on a camping trip in Central Pennsylvania in 2005, Strzelec learned about Cementum Age Analysis, a technique for determining the age of a bear based on layers of annual deposits on their teeth. She made a connection between these layered deposits and the layers created in her jewelry by means of the rapid-prototyping processes she employs. In the series that most closely associates age with teeth, "Self-Portrait Series: Neckpieces," Strzelec displays four school yearbook portraits of herself at various ages with neckpieces that feature oversized structurally-gridded teeth, ranging from baby teeth to permanent teeth. The clean, almost clinical display of the neckpieces is reminiscent of orthodontic headgear or other corrective devices most of us have endured for the sake of straight, white smiles.

Throughout the exhibition, layering plays an important role, especially in *Adam and Rebecca*, and *31 Neckpiece*, both of which utilize bands of color to represent various events in the artist's life, explained by a key displayed with each neckpiece. These colored stripes are in addition to the visible layers created by the rapid-prototyping process, which produces a sort of wood-grain pattern throughout the object. Upon close inspection, it becomes apparent that the neckpiece, links and all, was designed and created in one piece. Thankfully, the artist provides a DVD looping with a presentation on rapid-prototyping processes, helpful to novices with limited understanding of such technology.

Dead Cardinal for Dad 1, 2, 3, 2008
ABS plastic, leather, mixed media



Best of Series 1-5, 2009
fused deposition modeled ABS plastic

But why jewelry? After spending time with this exhibition, I found myself questioning the use of rapid-prototyping technology in a field traditionally dominated by hammers, flames, and metal. One series of clip-on brooches, "Age of Bears 1-5," drew me in with their colorful, highly textured, vortical (vaginal?) forms, but I could not reconcile their function as brooches. The jewelry purpose feels forced, unnecessary even. And the same amazing technology that allowed the links of a neckpiece to be designed and created as one object leaves something to be desired when the brooch is reduced to something as basic as a mere clip-on. But why does any maker choose certain materials over others for the purpose of adornment?

This question aside, there are many facets of the exhibition worth noting. Perhaps the most successful series in the show, *Dead Cardinal for Dad 1, 2, 3,* features life-size, red birds, hanging from leather straps, in various expressive poses. Here, the rapid-prototyping technology is used effectively in a complex, representational manner. Strzelec achieves similar complexity with *November 1985 Neckpieces: Hats and Vests*, in which photographs from her childhood are paired with neckpieces featuring the pictured toboggan hats and 1980s-style vests. The construction of the pom-poms on the hats is particularly intriguing, with zigzagging visible layers creating the intricate, fluffy form. It's an appropriate use of the technology resulting in a fun, highly personal series of pieces.

The self-portraits in this exhibition range from representational to intentionally vague, yet all have a highly personal feel. As a fellow maker, I was especially interested in the *Best of Series* brooches, which feature images of Strzelec's previous iconic works, such as the "Army Green Orchid Series," along with a new version of each piece. By referencing these past projects within the context of self-portraiture, Strzelec acknowledges the primary significance of creative work in her life. Placing one's art on an equal level to personal events is a bold statement, and one to which artists of all disciplines can surely relate.

Sharon Massey is a jeweler living in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Location, Location, Location: Tea and Coffee Services by John Marshall

Seattle Art Museum
October 25, 2011–January 15, 2012

by Matthew Kangas

Can a coffee and tea service be "site-related," like an earthwork or a postminimalist sculpture? If the artist is John Marshall, the answer is unequivocally "yes." In "Location, Location, Location: Tea and Coffee Services by John Marshall," three of his services (he has made six) were on view as part of the museum's new-acquisitions exhibition series, "Here and Now;" and in each case the work's form relates to its intended destination—either private home or institution.

The ostensible occasion for this small but important survey was the completion of *Tea and Coffee Service* (2008–09) for the Seattle Art Museum. A climax of sculptural form, this work is presented together with *Tea and Coffee Service* (1987) and *Coffee Set* (2000). A short video documentary with Marshall and SAM associate conservator Liz Brown provided illuminating conversation about repair, restoration, and conservation of silver, along with the artist's comments on his work.

The SAM commission affirms Marshall's general attitude that "collaboration is nothing but good." The imagery, design, and shape of the five-part ensemble were inspired by the museum's new Allied Architects-designed permanent facility one block from the Pike Place Market. The museum is unusually sited on the lower six floors of the northwest corner of a 22-story office building.

"The metaphor of movement and constant change in the museum" was Marshall's starting point. The service's composition—a triangular tray with polygonal sheets of sterling silver and argentium set above interlocking planes of clear acrylic—reinforces a sense of provisional placement, rather like the shifting tectonic plates in Seattle's earthquake zone. Creamer and sugar bowl are upright cones held in place by handles that use rosewood bars to weight the containers, each of which rests on a silver pinpoint cone as its base. Are they small navigator explorers on Mars, firmly anchored yet obviously mobile?

Double-post rosewood handles, whose bases rest on the tray, allow the pourer to confidently grab the coffee or teapot when lifting. According to Marshall (who retired from the University of Washington in 2001), "In a service, the concept of performance is paramount. The tea and coffee pots are the major players and the cream and sugar are in supporting roles." The dramatic looping handles also allude to an authentic icon of postmodernism, the terracotta-clad arches of the exterior of the attached original building on the southwest corner designed by Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown in 1993.

Tea and Coffee Service, 2008-09
sterling silver, rosewood, Argentium sterling silver, acrylic
coffeepot 13 ¾ x 6 ⅞ x 4 ¾"
COLLECTION SEATTLE ART MUSEUM
PHOTO: JERRY DAVIS

Coffee Set (2000) was commissioned by Ruth J. Nutt, a prominent American silver collector who has a home in the San Juan Islands north of Seattle. If *Service* (2008–09) suggests evening demitasse rituals or elegant midnight ceremonies, *Coffee Set* opens up to the land, water, and space of the Pacific Northwest. The ivory-like carved acrylic handles on each of its four components echoes the snow-capped mountains visible from Nutt's living room, while the service's pots and bowls, each shaped like a rocky island, appear to float on a jagged-edged black basalt tray that stands in for the flat waters of Puget Sound.

Anne Gould Hauberg's commission, *Tea and Coffee Service* (1987), presents a fantasy of Danish modern silver (see Henning Koppel); its residential siting—a masterpiece of midcentury modern split-level design—is the Haubergs' former home, designed by Roland Terry, in Seattle's tony Washington Park neighborhood. This set was Marshall's first tea-and-coffee-service commission. Interestingly, its smooth modernist surfaces would be supplanted a quarter-century later with the active chasing and repoussé work in the Seattle Art Meseum's service. And the rosewood-inset trivet on the tray is a far cry from the floating islands of *Coffee Set* (2000).

Seen all together, the three commissions underscore Marshall's solid achievement and partly chronicle the artistic journey he has undertaken since leaving Syracuse and arriving in Seattle in 1970.

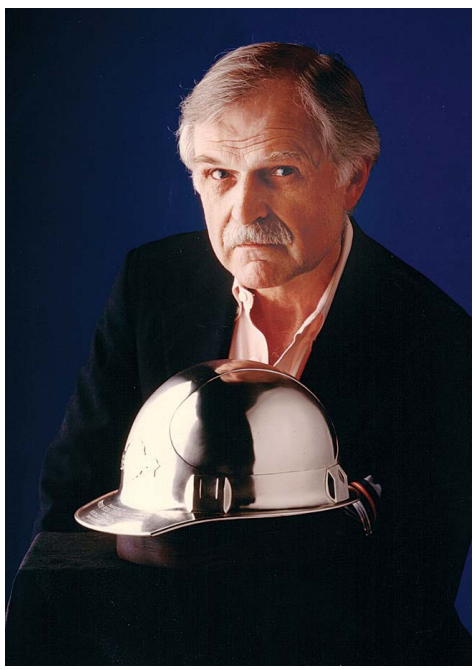
Seattle-based art critic Matthew Kangas's latest books are, Return to the Viewer: Selected Art Reviews *and* The Work of Jack Sures: Tactile Desires.

Five-piece Coffee and Tea Set, ca. 2000
sterling silver, basalt, acrylic
coffeepot height 12 ⅜"
COLLECTION OF RUTH J. NUTT
PHOTO: JERRY DAVIS

William Frederick (1922–2012)

BY JEFFREY HERMAN

I dare say, few contemporary silversmiths would withstand the rigors of producing holloware at the rate William "Bill" Frederick did. He was a silversmith's silversmith, a designer and maker of utilitarian silver intended to be useful, not simply displayed in a glass case. While Bill catered without complaint to the needs and demands of his clients, he never sacrificed his own aesthetic. He was one of those rare individuals who created silver the way it was done by small shops and metalsmiths of the Arts and Crafts era: Frans Gyllenberg, Clemens Friedell, and Porter Blanchard, to name a few. Like these forerunners, Bill Frederick designed and made beautiful utilitarian pieces of substantial weight that would last for generations. He was also among a handful of silversmiths who accepted the challenge of making reproductions. For Bill it was simply a service to his customers, "taking the work as it comes," as he often remarked. His work was consistently in high demand, both by the church and private collectors who appreciated his unquestionable skill, but also Bill's reputation for getting their jobs completed on time and within budget. And he was always eager to take on technically challenging projects, pushing himself to expand his knowledge, not settling for the easier option. For these many reasons Bill was constantly busy, often overwhelmed, with commissions. His staunch work ethic held up, even into his late eighties, and his customers were often generations of the same family. Given Bill's success it always troubled me that, despite his 50 years of experience, his shop rate remained among the lowest of all artisans in the Society of American Silversmiths (SAS). Though for decades considered one of the finest silversmiths in the metro-Chicago area, he was much too modest to put an accurate dollar value on his self-worth. We had numerous conversations that ended with me asking: "And have you upped your hourly rate yet?" "Weeeeeell, not really," he would say, in a somewhat embarrassed tone. "You know what you're worth, right, Bill?" "I do, and I'll try to up my rate on the next job," he'd reply, if only to appease me. This went on the entire time I knew him, from the founding of SAS in 1989.



Silversmith William Frederick

What made our relationship truly special were our chats—about the complexities of life, and the struggles of being a silversmith in the computer age. And we made each other laugh a lot. Bill would tell the same joke over and over. Even if I'd heard it three times before, I chuckled anyway. Whenever I had a concern, he would always say, "Everything will work itself out," in a calming yet confident voice.

William Frederick was an elegant man who lived an amazingly rich life, one he shared with the artist Ralph Arnold, his late partner of 50 years. He was a peach of a human being whose skills earned him the coveted Hans Christensen Sterling Silversmith's Award in 2001. We must treasure these humble titans who pass among us without much fanfare. Silversmiths like him will never become outmoded because of changing societal values, such as the escalating price of silver.

Hopefully this tribute will lead readers to take a moment to remember a titan, who may have exerted a profound influence in their lives. And to those too young to have yet encountered such a person as Bill, I say, "Think about becoming one yourself."

Jeffrey Herman, a silversmith, is the founder and executive director of the Society of American Silversmiths.

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A silver tea and coffee service from the late William Frederick, ca. 1989

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BY DANA SINGER

Recipients of SNAG 's 2012 Educational Endowment scholarships (clockwise from top left): Erica Meier, Lindsay Fisher, and Bongsang Cho; and Hoover & Strong Scholarship awardee, Jolee Mickesh.

Demonstration by metalsmith Susanna Speirs during SNAG's 41st annual conference in Phoenix/Scottsdale.

Applaud the SNAG Conference

SNAG's 41st annual conference, "The Heat is On," held in Phoenix/Scottsdale in May, drew 600 enthusiastic participants. The conference was dedicated to our 2012 Lifetime Achievement Award recipient, J. Fred Woell, and opened with an award ceremony in his honor.

Thank you to our longtime corporate sponsor, worldwide distributor of tools and equipment Rio Grande (for the eighth consecutive year); our host, the Arizona Designer Craftsmen; and our amazing co-chairs Becky McDonah, Tedd McDonah, and Lynette Andreasen. Our gratitude also goes to sponsors Todd Reed, Boardman Family Foundation, Myron Toback, Catherine Morgan, Jewelers Mutual Insurance Company, United Precious Metals Refining, Charon Kransen Arts, Otto Frei Co. and Bill Gangi Multisensory Art, MJSA, Art Jewelry Forum, Facèré Jewelry Art Gallery, Dynamic Display Systems, University of North Texas College of Visual Arts and Design, and many others who sponsored individual sessions at the conference.

SNAG 2012 Educational Endowment Scholarship Recipients

This year's SNAG Educational Endowment competitive scholarships, awarded annually to both graduate and undergraduate students, went to Erica Meier, graduate student at University of Wisconsin, Madison; Lindsay Fisher, undergraduate student at Grand Valley State University; and Bongsang Cho, graduate student at Savannah College of Art & Design.

For the second year SNAG also administered the Hoover & Strong Scholarship to a graduate student—this year to Jolee Mickesh from Bowling Green University—designing high-quality production jewelry.

SNAG Welcomes New Board Members

At the conference, Renee Zettle-Sterling, educator at Grand Valley State University, became SNAG's president-elect. Brigitte Martin, founder and owner of crafthaus, and Marthe Le Van, writer and former editor at Lark Books, were elected by the SNAG membership to its board of directors. SNAG thanks outgoing board members, past president Harlan Butt, John Rais, Anne Mondro, and Anne Smulovitz for their years of devoted service.

From left: Renee Zettle-Sterling, SNAG's President-Elect, and new SNAG Board members Marthe Le Van and Brigitte Martin.

J. Fred Woell

J. Fred Woell, a pioneer in our field, received SNAG's prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award at a ceremony that opened the annual conference in Phoenix, last May. Eleanor Moty gave a moving tribute, speaking about his artwork and career as an educator spanning more than 50 years. Woell humbly accepted the award (created by Cynthia Eid) to a standing ovation. Woell is recognized as the first person in the contemporary field of jewelry to use cast found objects in his work, which deals with political and social commentary.

Top: Fred Woell in his Deer Isle, Maine, studio, 2010

Sailing from the Midwest, 1986
brass, copper, sterling silver
2 ⅝ x 3 ⅛ x ¼"

Woell was born February 4, 1934, in Evergreen Park, Illinois. His family moved many times during his youth, and as a result, Woell became an introverted child with few close friends. The one constant and positive influence during this time, he recalls, was his membership in the Boy Scouts (he eventually became an Eagle Scout) an experience he credits with developing his abiding respect for the environment. Many of the values he acquired as a Scout, akin to Taoist teachings, still drive his life. Woell lives on Deer Isle, Maine, a place he finds creatively invigorating. "There's something about the outdoors and the space and nature here," says Woell, "that always charges me up... I've tried to put myself into places where there is a strong sense of the environment. And in my own creative work there are often comments about the environment and protecting it, appreciation for it or anger about what we're doing to trash it. And I think that all got started in those years."[1]

In 1960, Woell received an economics degree from the University of Illinois, but, unhappy with the field, he returned to school and received a BFA degree with the intention of teaching art. His mentor, Robert von Neumann, encouraged him to attend graduate school at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where Woell received an MFA in jewelry and metals. After teaching for several years, he again returned to school for a second MFA degree in sculpture at Cranbrook Academy of Art in Michigan. Woell began making his characteristic cast-plastic pieces during this time.

"I make things I hope people can laugh at and yet take seriously," Woell says. "I use my work as a platform to express my reaction to things I see around me. I use humor in my work to make the serious nature of those things bearable. It is my aim to make an object look complete and possess a quality that gives the work a presence or life of its own. I try hard to keep the freshness of my fingerprint on the work and to maintain an intimate, spontaneous quality that will give it a timeless character. I work largely with found objects that come into my life by serendipity. I do my best to allow these 'things' I assemble to come together and form unique objects. Taking the chance of assembling these things means some of them must be changed and even destroyed when they are assembled. It makes the work a discovery and keeps the creative process edgy."[2]

Woell has inspired countless students and members of the metals community through his teaching and artworks. He has had teaching appointments at Boston University; Swain School of Design, New Bedford, MA; the State University of New York at New Paltz; and Haystack Mountain School of Crafts, Deer Isle, ME. His works are in the permanent collections of the Museum of Art and Design and the Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian American Art Museum. Woell has received three National Endowment of the Arts grants and is a Fellow of the American Craft Council.

SUE AMENDOLARA
PRESIDENT, SOCIETY OF NORTH AMERICAN GOLDSMITHS

1. Interview with J. Fred Woell conducted June 6, 2001–January 19, 2002, by Donna Gold, for the Archives of American Art's Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America,
2. Cited from Carl Little, "2012 Lifetime Achievement Award," www.snagmetalsmith.org.

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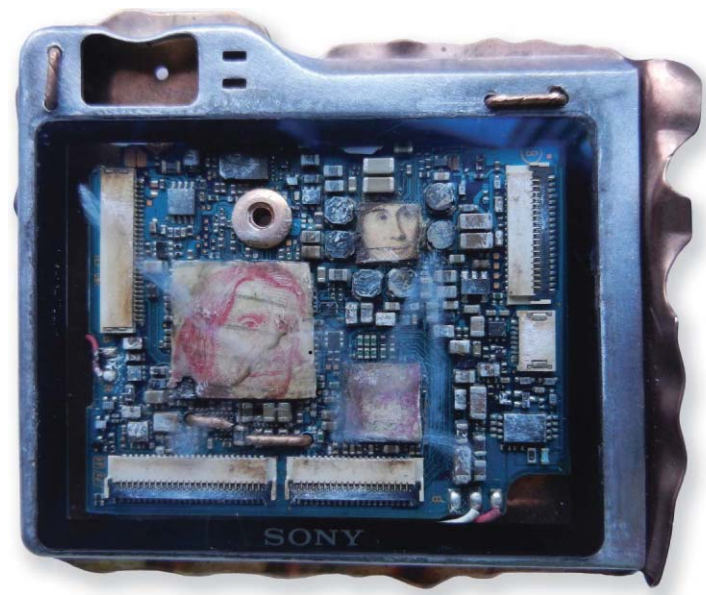

"The Good, the Bad, and the Brave" © J. Fred Woell 2011 aluminum, plastic, paper, copper

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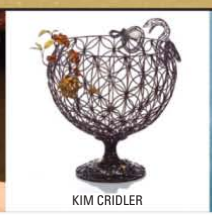
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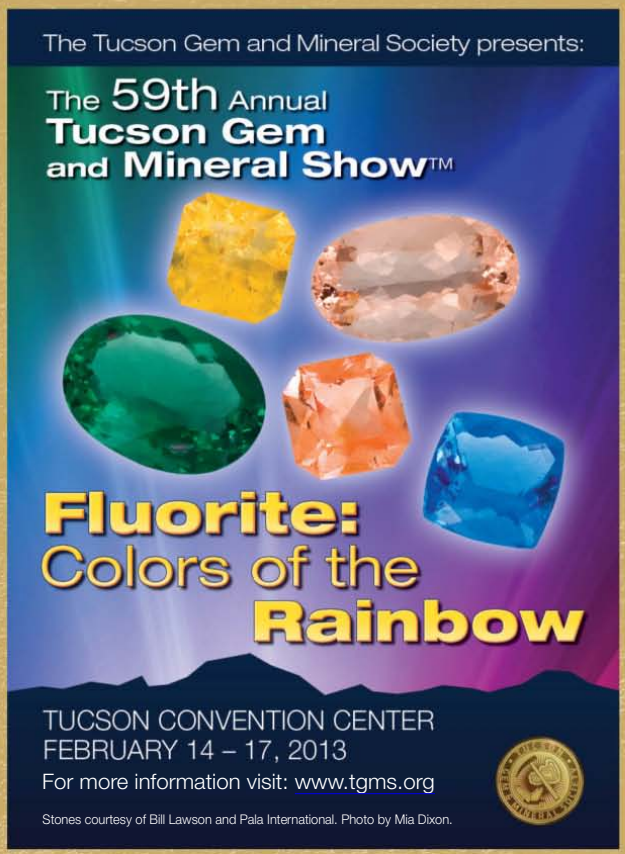
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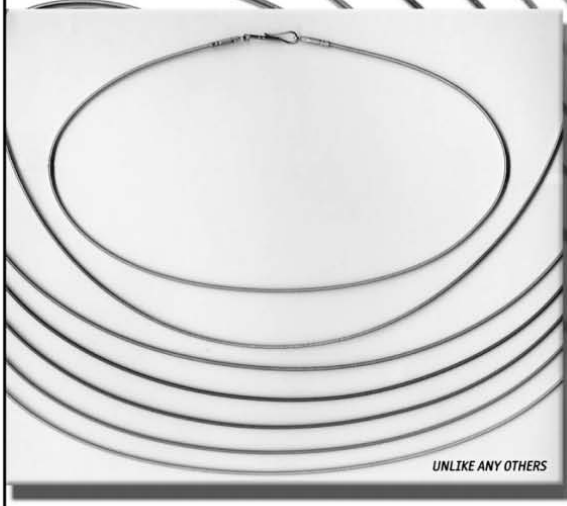

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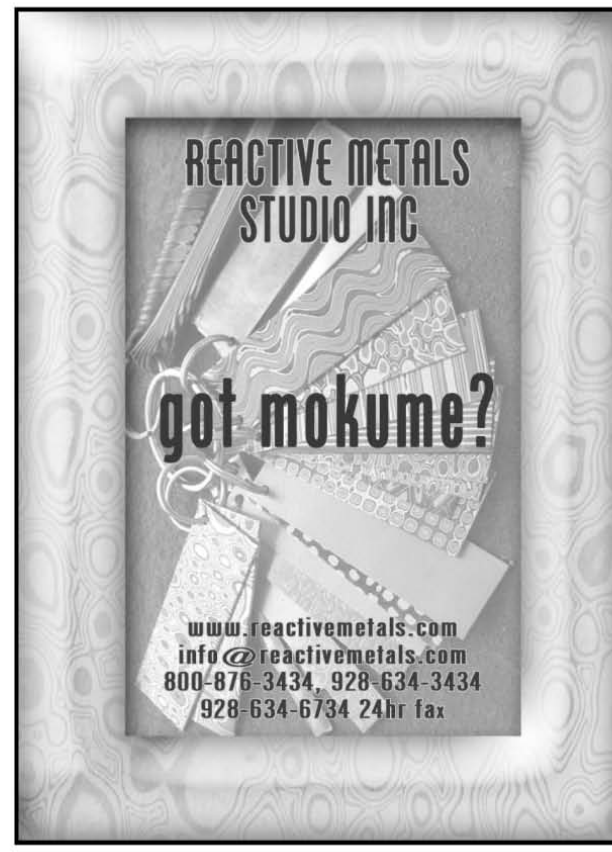

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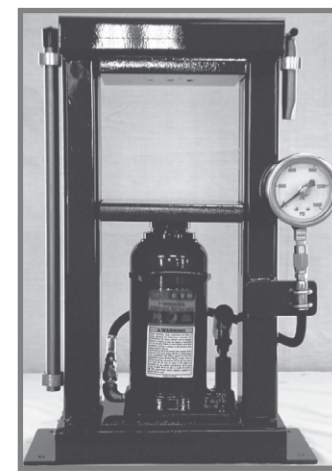

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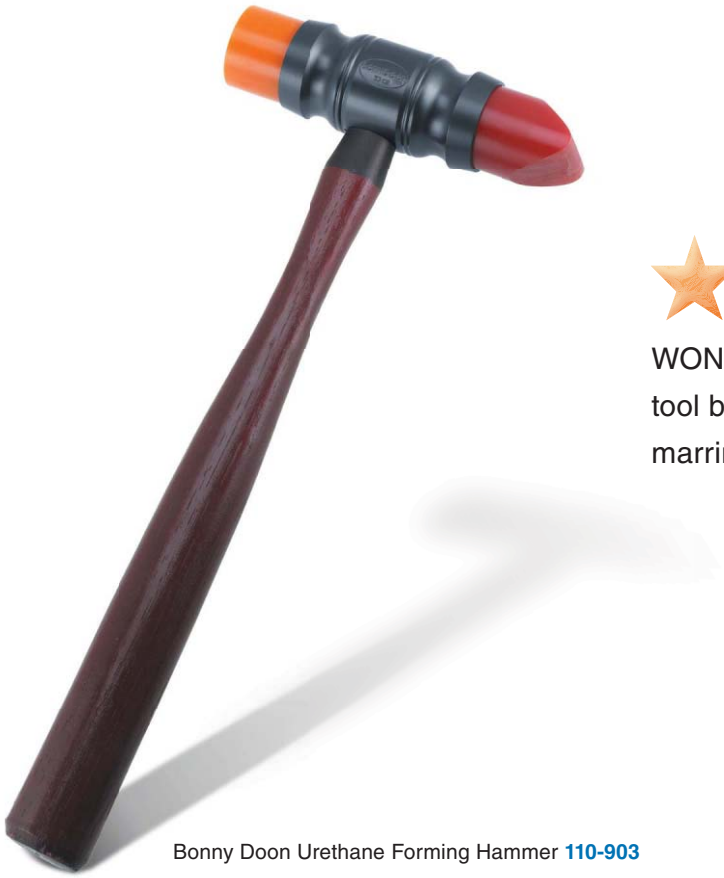

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